













*After Watts]*

*[Rischgitz Studios*

*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

# TENNYSON'S POETICAL WORKS



*With an Introduction by  
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## INTRODUCTION

IN the history of English letters, Tennyson stands a stately figure, the representative poet of a whole epoch. No English poet enjoyed in his life-time a supremacy so long, so undisputed.

His pre-eminence was not won so easily as has been sometimes assumed. During his youth and early middle life, though the hope and idol of his own circle, most of the critics were against him, and he was assailed with the violence and stupidity characteristic of the criticism of the day. The public, indeed, was in advance of the critics, though it was the domestic idylls, now distasted, which won him widest audience. Pope and Byron alone of our poets had a comparable reign. Forty years before his death we are told that among the young men at Oxford, "there was the general conviction that Tennyson was the greatest poet of the century; some held him the greatest of all poets, or, at least, of all modern poets." The *Idylls of the King* disappointed his most discerning admirers, and provoked this outspoken criticism: but at the time of his death the general opinion could hardly bear to find a fault in him. Poetry died with Byron, it was said in 1824; in 1892 poetry died, for many minds, with Tennyson.

Unmistakably his death closed an epoch. The inevitable reaction came, and before long two generations were confronting each other, the one shocked and bewildered that their idol should be dethroned and depreciated, the other genuinely puzzled that this poetry should ever have meant so much and exerted so strange a spell. A still younger generation seems to be turning to Tennyson again, and with a fresher



and more impartial mind will perhaps see him more truly as he is.

What was it which gave Tennyson's early volumes their fascination for contemporaries? To quote again from his Oxford admirer, "Tennyson had invented a new poetry, a new poetic English; his use of words was new, and every piece that he wrote was a conquest of a new region." Doubtless this was true. In poems like *Mariana* and *The Lady of Shalott* there was a wonderful clearness of colour, a precision and fineness of delineation, fused with what Swinburne called "fervent and faultless melodies." And this freshness seemed all the more wonderful, because at that time both Keats and Shelley were still practically unknown. The pictorial quality of Tennyson's verse is always a marked characteristic, and predominates in his earlier work. In this, as in his fondness for the reviving of old words and re-handling of the language he showed more affinity with Keats than with any other predecessor. Yet the difference is as great as the likeness. It is something like the difference between an early painting by Millais and an early painting by Rossetti. The transfiguring intensity of Keats's imagination is exchanged for delicate and subtle observation. Compare the ideal portrait of Homer in *The Palace of Art*,—"A million wrinkles carved his skin"—with such touches as the "realmless eyes" of Saturn in *Hyperion*. Nevertheless, Tennyson's gift of clear-coloured distinctness was something fresh in English poetry, and in itself delightful. Observation was to provide an ever-increasing element in the literature of the nineteenth century, and Tennyson prided himself on his "accuracy," to become in later life a veritable obsession. Fidelity to the facts of Nature is not the mark of a powerful creative art, and subservience to this ideal has led the arts into a blind alley. But in Tennyson's case we must note that it is never mere observation, however fine and sensitive; the observation is wrought into a picture which subtly corresponds with some mood of the mind and

becomes its external counterpart. His work is rich in examples of this gift. *In Memoriam* is notably so: one may recall the familiar lines in *Locksley Hall*:

" Shall thy heart be put to proof  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof."

It is true that in later work, especially the *Idylls of the King*, Tennyson consulted rather too deliberately the notebooks in which he had shaped a verse out of some natural effect that struck him, and we find an image or picture stuck in without a real congruity, because not flowering from the matter of the verse. Some of these pictures retain a lodge in the memory when the characters and action of the idyll have faded from the mind; for it was into such things that Tennyson put his genius.

The evocative power of this gift for finding imagery to express phases and subtleties of reverie and emotion, otherwise scarce expressible, owes much to the secret charm of the rhythm in which it is fused. Of all Tennyson's gifts, the gift for verbal melody—displayed to its fullest in the *Choric Song* of the *Lotos-Eaters*—was the most essential and the most consummate. Rarely, if ever, has it quite the magical vibrations of Shelley, but it is unique of its kind. And it was matched with a verbal finish and seldom-failing felicity of diction which went largely, no doubt, to create that impression of freshness, of "a new poetic English." In this felicity and finish, as in the care for smoothness and versification, if in nothing else, Tennyson resembled Pope. No quality of verse makes a wider appeal; though extreme of finish is always apt to provoke satiety and reaction, as has happened in the case of both poets.

It is easy, then, to understand the fascination of freshness, the new music and colour, which in the two volumes of 1842 cast so strong a spell over the rising generation. But that Tennyson should make exquisite melodies and delightful pictures



in his verse did not content all his friends. It is remarkable how deep a personal impression (not so easily to be recovered from written records) Tennyson made on all who came to know him; and having chosen him out, with his fine presence and bardic air, to be the representative poet of his age, his friends, not unnaturally perhaps, had ambitions for him beyond his own. They inflicted on him a "mission." They wished him to be, not only a great lyricist, but a great epic or philosophic poet, who might stand beside Milton or Dante, and produce some work on the grand scale comparable with the masterpieces of the past. Tennyson responded in some sort to these incitements, but chose his own path. He was aware of his own limitations. He once said to a friend, "I can execute like Shakespeare, but there's nothing in me." Neither statement was true, but the avowal is interesting. It might have seemed that here was the man to accomplish the great works which Keats had plotted but did not live to execute. But Tennyson lacked Keats's capacity, even his ambition, in this direction; on the philosophic side, also, his intellect was less profound and intuitive. He refused to challenge epic rank with his Arthurian poem, splitting up his theme into a series of "idylls," the "little pictures" which the poets of Alexandria had invented when people first began to crowd together and live in towns, and which, when the same thing happened in industrial England, Tennyson had made so favourite a form. Even his blank verse was lyrical in tone. Tennyson was the first to write lyrics in regular blank verse lines, and of all his lyrics none is more beautiful than *Tears, Idle Tears*. For, whatever the theme he essayed, Tennyson was essentially a lyric poet, first and last.

But though refusing epic adventures, Tennyson, as time went on, greatly enlarged his range, and became more and more an interpreter of the thought of his time. Politics, social questions, religion and science, became part of the texture of his themes. He became the spokesman of the national mind. Inevitably



this was to absorb into his verse much that was transitory, much that was no longer the expression of his most intimate and poetic mood.

Tennyson's inborn temperament was mixed and strange. Sensitive in the extreme to the beauty of things, he was vulnerable to the most insignificant criticism. Tall and strong in frame, soft-skinned, gipsy-complexioned, indolent, brooding, and self-centred, he had a morbid strain in him, with dark, despondent moods, mingled with something of the voluptuous, suppressed yet visible in his poetry. He was haunted by the atmosphere and landscape of his boyhood, the endless Lincolnshire fens, the wold, the solitary beach with its plunging waves. Success following long disappointment, fame, prominence in the public eye, flattery and adulation, influenced and coloured but did not change at the core this temperament, steeped in those early associations of solitude and reverie. We cannot yet tell what of Tennyson's later work will prove the most enduring in its hold on readers ; but few can doubt that it is likely to be those poems into which the secret essence of his nature, his innermost emotion, is poured. Yet his peculiar temperament made it almost inevitable that, consciously or unconsciously, he should become the mouthpiece of his time. The receptive, sensitive part of him was predominant over the active and creative. There was a sort of passivity in him which accepted the world of Victorian England, its modes of thought and its unconscious hypocrisies ; or, if stung into antagonism, railed and scolded, but had neither the passion of the born rebel nor the serenity of an Olympian. Tennyson perhaps (who knows?) would rather have been left to his day-dreams. But it was expected of him that he should take an attitude and utter sage counsel. And the duty was accepted.

Some, who find Tennyson inferior in grasp of thought, and are repelled by his insularities, would compensate him for these defects by proclaiming him a supreme artist. But in truth his



excellences and defects are of a piece. He is a marvellous craftsman, but a decorator rather than a constructor. And just as his art dwells on the beauty of exterior surface, but rarely penetrates beneath to the interior beauty of design, lacking the creative imagination which dissolves the world to make it anew, so his thought rarely penetrates to the universal, the elemental. He adheres to his time, and it to him. None the less, though we are conscious, especially in the *Idylls of the King*, of a certain unreality and inadequacy to life, and a proneness to superfluous moralising, there are among Tennyson's later, more "public," poems, not a few which rank high of their kind. His patriotism is often marred by arrogance and insular complacency, but it is genuine. The *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* is in a lofty strain and majestically phrased. *The Revenge* is a magnificent ballad. And in pieces like the lines to F. D. Maurice, he does with especial felicity a kind of thing which no English poet has done so well.

When we consider the time into which Tennyson grew up and the spoiling influences to which he was subjected in an unparalleled degree, we may wonder less at the extent to which he submitted to the conventions and codes of his time than at the inner integrity which, after all, he preserved. He grew up in a period which was far from propitious to great art of any kind. Taste was never at a lower ebb. It was the era of keepsakes and the vignette. It was a time of exhaustion after great national effort and excitement, of distress and discontent; of the coming to power of a newly-rich, commercial class. The mind of the nation was preoccupied with social and moral questions. It was excited to boundless hopes by the conquests of mechanical science, which were to create riches and comfort for the few, but being of material things only, produced in the end disillusion. England had lost the intellectual contact with Europe which she enjoyed in the former century; she hugged her insularity. This was the atmosphere that Tennyson breathed in.

Paradoxically, the virtuosity of his craftsmanship has helped to injure his fame. In most eminent poets of large production there are whole tracts which are admitted failures; these are forgotten, and do not count in our estimate of the poet. But Tennyson's mastery of metre and pointed phrasing still attract to poems where we feel the thought to be poor and the imaginative treatment unworthy, and it would have been better for his fame if they had been wholly dull and forgotten. Thus his weaknesses, his concessions to prettiness and popular sentiment, are more vividly kept in mind, and his best work is not easily detachable from the rest, as is the case with Wordsworth. It is true indeed that his prevailing attitude of mind, his English love of compromise in intellectual matters, his pleased acquiescence in "freedom broadening slowly down from precedent to precedent," the condescension in his treatment of love and woman, his complacencies and prejudices—the lack, in fine, of elemental ardour in his imagination—will always encounter a certain antagonism. Yet even in his later work there are poems where some deeper, some more secret and mysterious source has found an outlet.

" Past, Future, glimpse and fade  
Thro' some slight spell,  
A gleam from yonder vale,  
Some far blue fell,  
And sympathies, how frail,  
In sound and smell "

That is from one of the lyrics of his old age, and in such strains we seem to overhear the true, the inner voice of the poet communing with himself, away from all the world.

It is not for any one to-day to dogmatise on the work of a master still so near us. Here are his poems, in which each reader will discover or re-discover what most delights him; whether



the clear-coloured imagery and melodious movement of the earlier poems, rising in *Ulysses* to a severer style and a profounder tone, or the troubled, inward cry, the wistful landscapes, the mournful cadences of *In Memoriam*, the lyric passion to be heard in parts at least of *Maud*, or the songs that all through so long a life flowed from him at his most spontaneous moments. For something large, simple, and child-like persisted in the man through every influence, and kept him a singer to the end.

LAURENCE BINYON.

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# Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson.

1830-1860.

## TO QUEEN VICTORIA.

REVERED, beloved-- O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old;

Victoria, - since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;

And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there ;

Then—while a sweeter music wakes,  
And through wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sunlit almond-blossom shakes--

Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;  
For though the faults were thick as dust  
In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,



## TO QUEEN VICTORIA.

And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day !  
May children of our children say,  
“ She wrought her people lasting good ;  
“ Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;  
“ And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet  
“ By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea ”

*March, 1851.*

# EARLY POEMS.

## CLARIBEL

### A MELODY.

#### I.

**W**HERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall :  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth

#### II.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone :  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone :  
At midnight the moon cometh,  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throstle lispeth,  
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
**W**here Claribel low-lieth.

## LILIAN.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
 Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
 When I ask her if she love me,  
 Claps her tiny hands above me,  
 Laughing all she can;  
 She'll not tell me if she love me,  
 Cruel little Lilian.

## II.

When my passion seeks  
 Pleasance in love-sighs,  
 She, looking through and through me  
 Thoroughly to undo me,  
 Smiling, never speaks:  
 So innocent-arch, so cunning simple,  
 From beneath her gather'd wimple  
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
 Till the lightning laughs dimple  
 The baby-roses in her cheeks;  
 Then away she flies.

## III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian!  
 Gaiety without eclipse  
 Wearieth me, May Lilian:  
 Through my very heart it thrilleth  
 When from crimson-threaded lips  
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth:  
 Prythee weep, May Lilian.

## IV.

Praying all I can,  
If prayers will not hush thee,  
Airy Lilian,  
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
Fairy Lilian.

## ISABEL.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed  
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,  
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by  
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane  
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,  
Madonna-wise on either side her head ;  
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign  
The summer calm of golden-charity,  
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
The stately flower of female fortitude,  
Of perfect wifhood and pure lowlihead.

## II.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
And thorough-edged intellect to part  
Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;  
The laws of marriage character'd in gold  
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;  
A love still burning upward, giving light  
To read those laws ; an accent very low  
In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
Right to the heart and brain, though undescried  
Winning its way with extreme gentleness  
Through all the outworks of suspicious pride ;



A courage to endure and to obey ;  
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
 Crown'd Isabel, through all her placid life,  
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

## III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;  
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,  
   Till in its onward current it absorbs  
     With swifter movement and in purer light  
     The vexed eddies of its wayward brother :  
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,  
 Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite,  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs  
     Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other—  
     Shadow forth thee :—the world hath not another  
 (Though all her fairest forms are types of thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity)  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the broad valley dimm'd in  
   the gloaming :  
 Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only the far river shines.  
 Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-blowing  
   bushes,  
 Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.  
 Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly ; the grasshopper carolleth  
   clearly ;  
 Deeply the turtle coos ; shrilly the owlet halioos ;  
 Winds creep ; dewes fall chilly : in her first sleep earth breathes  
   stilly :  
 Over the pools in the burn water-gnats murmur and mourn.  
 Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmering water outfloweth :  
 Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to the dark hyaline.

Low-throned Hesper is stayèd between the two peaks ; but the  
 Naiad  
 Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath her breast.  
 The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all things bringeth,  
 Smoothing the wearied mind : bring me my love, Rosalind.  
 Thou comest morning and even ; she cometh not morning or  
 even.  
 False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet Rosalind ?

MARIANA.

“Mariana in the moated grange.”—*Measure for Measure*.

With blackest moss the flower-plots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the peach to the garden-wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, “ My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,” she said ;  
 She said, “ I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! ”

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.  
 After the flitting of the bats,  
 When thickest dark did trance the sky,  
 She drew her casement-curtain by,  
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
 She only said, “ The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,” she said ;  
 She said, “ I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! ”

Upon the middle of the night,  
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :  
The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
From the dark fen the oxen's low  
Came to her : without hope of change,  
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn  
About the lonely moated grange.  
She only said, "The day is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am weary, weary.  
I would that I were dead !"

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray.  
She only said, "My life is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead !"

And ever when the moon was low,  
And the shrill winds were up and away  
In the white curtain, to and fro,  
She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
But when the moon was very low,  
And wild winds bound within their cell,  
The shadow of the poplar fell  
Upon her bed, across her brow.  
She only said, "The night is dreary,  
He cometh not," she said ;  
She said, "I am weary, weary,  
I would that I were dead !"



All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane ; the mouse  
 Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
 Old faces glimmer'd through the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
 She only said, " My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, " I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead ! "

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense ; but most she loath'd the hour  
 When the thick-moted sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western bower.  
 Then, said she, " I am very dreary,  
 He will not come," she said ;  
 She wept, " I am aweary, aweary,  
 Oh, God, that I were dead ! "

## TO ———.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,  
 Edg'd with sharp laughter, cuts atwain  
 The knots that tangle human creeds,  
 The wounding cords that bind and strain  
 The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fring'd eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine :  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain.



## II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :  
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now  
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
 Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant swords  
 Can do away that ancient lie ;  
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
 Shot through and through with cunning words.

## III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,  
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
 Until she be an athlete bold,  
 And weary with a finger's touch  
 Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;  
 Like that strange angel which of old,  
 Until the breaking of the light,  
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,  
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
 In the dim tract of Penue!

## MADELINE.

THOU art not steep'd in golden languors  
 No tranced summer calm is thine,  
 Ever-varying Madeline.  
 Through light and shadow thou dost range,  
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
 Delicious spites and darling angers,  
 And airy forms of flitting change.

## II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
Revealings deep and clear are thine  
Of wealthy smiles : but who may know  
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?  
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
Who may know?

Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
Light-glooming over eyes divine,  
Like little clouds sun-fring'd, are thine.

Ever-varying Madeline.

Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
From one another,

Each to each is dearest brother ;

Hues of the silken sheeny woof

Momently shot into each other.

All the mystery is thine ;

Smiling, frowning, evermore,

Thou art perfect in love-lore,

Ever-varying Madeline.

## III.

A subtle, sudden flame,

By veering passion fann'd,

About thee breaks and dances ;

When I would kiss thy hand,

The flush of anger'd shame

O'erflows thy calmer glances,

And o'er black brows drops down

A sudden-curved frown :

But when I turn away,

Thou, willing me to stay,

Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest :

But, looking fixedly the while,

All my bounding heart entanglest  
 In a golden-netted smile ;  
 Then in madness and in bliss,  
 If my lips should dare to kiss  
 Thy taper fingers amorously,  
 Again thou blushest angerly ;  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown.

## THE MERMAN.

Who would be  
 A merman bold,  
 Sitting alone,  
 Singing alone  
 Under the sea,  
 With a crown of gold,  
 On a throne ?

### II.

I would be a merman bold.  
 I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;  
 I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power  
 But at night I would roam abroad and play  
 With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,  
 Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;  
 And holding them back by their flowing locks  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
 Laughingly, laughingly ;  
 And then we would wander away, away  
 To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,  
 Chasing each other merrily.



## III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;  
But the wave would make music above us afar—  
Low thunder and light in the magic night—  
    Neither moon nor star.  
We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and cry  
    All night, merrily, merrily ;  
They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,  
Laughing and clapping their hands between,  
    All night, merrily, merrily :  
But I would throw to them back in mine  
Turkis and agate and almondine :  
Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
    Laughingly, laughingly.  
Oh ! what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !  
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID.

## I.

Who would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne?

## II.

I would be a mermaid fair.  
I would sing to myself the whole of the day ;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb my hair ;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,  
" Who is it loves me? who loves not me? "  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall  
    Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-bud crown  
    Low adown and around ;  
And I should look like a fountain of gold  
    Springing alone  
    With a shrill inner sound,  
    Over the throne  
    In the midst of the hall ;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
And all the mermen under the sea  
Would feel their immortality  
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III.

But at night I would wander away, away.  
I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,  
And lightly vault from the throne and play  
    With the mermen in and out of the rocks ;  
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,  
    On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,  
    Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.  
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,  
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap  
    From the diamond ledges that jut from the dells ;  
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list

Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;  
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,  
In the purple twilights under the sea ;  
But the king of them all would carry me,  
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,  
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;  
Then all the dry pied things that be  
In the hueless mosses under the sea  
Would curl round my silver feet silently,  
All looking up for the love of me.  
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft  
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,  
All looking down for the love of me.

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND NOT IN UNITY  
WITH ITSELF.

O God ! my God ! have mercy now.  
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou  
Did'st die for me, for such as *me*,  
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
And that my sin was as a thorn  
Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,  
Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,  
In this extremest misery  
Of ignorance, I should require  
A sign ! and if a bolt of fire  
Would rive the slumbrous summer noon  
While I do pray to Thee alone,  
Think my belief would stronger grow !  
Is not my human pride brought low ?  
The boastings of my spirit still ?  
The joy I had in my freewill



All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown?  
 And what is left to me, but Thou,  
 And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;  
 Christians with happy countenances—  
 And children all seem full of Thee!  
 And women smile with saint-like glances  
 Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd  
 Above Thee, on that happy morn  
 When angels spake to men aloud,  
 And Thou and peace to earth were born.  
 Goodwill to me as well as all—

I one of them: my brothers they:  
 Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
 And confidence, day after day;  
 And trust and hope till things should cease,  
 And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!  
 To hold a common scorn of death!  
 And at a burial to hear

The creaking cords which wound and eat  
 Into my human heart, whene'er  
 Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,

With hopeful grief, were passing sweet!  
 A grief not uninformed, and dull  
 Hearted with hope, of hope as full  
 As is the blood with life, or night  
 And a dark cloud with rich moonlight.

To stand beside a grave, and see  
 The red small atoms wherewith we  
 Are built, and smile in calm, and say—

“These little motes and graves shall be  
 Clothed on with immortality  
 More glorious than the noon of day—

All that is pass'd into the flowers  
 And into beasts and other men,  
 And all the Norland whirlwind showers

From open vaults, and all the sea  
O'er washes with sharp salts, again  
Shall fleet together all, and be  
Indued with immortality."

Thrice happy state again to be  
The trustful infant on the knee!  
Who lets his waxen fingers play  
About his mother's neck, and knows  
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
They comfort him by night and day;  
They light his little life alway;  
He hath no thought of coming woes;  
He hath no care of life or death,  
Scarce outward signs of joy arise  
Because the Spirit of happiness  
And perfect rest so inward is;  
And loveth so his innocent heart,  
Her temple and her place of birth,  
Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
Life of the fountain there, beneath  
Its salient springs, and far apart,  
Hating to wander out on earth,  
Or breathe into the hollow air,  
Whose chillness would make visible  
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
Full fills him with beatitude.  
Oh! sure it is a special care  
Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
To arm in proof, and guard about  
With triple-mailed trust, and clear  
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed rancy were  
As thine, my mother, when with brows  
Propped on thy knees, my hands upheld



In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,  
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
For me unworthy !— and beheld  
The mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
The beauty and repose of faith,  
And the clear spirit shining through.  
Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry  
From roots which strike so deep? why dare  
Paths in the desert? Could not I  
Bow myself down, where thou hast knelt,  
To th' earth—until the ice would melt  
Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?  
What Devil had the heart to scathe  
Flowers thou had'st rear'd—to brush the dew  
From thine own lily, when thy grave  
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?  
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I  
So little love for thee? But why  
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why pray  
To one who heeds not, who can save  
But will not? Great in faith, and strong  
Against the grief of circumstance  
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
Thro' utter dark a full-sailed skiff,  
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
Unto the death, not sunk ! I know  
At matins and at evensong,  
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
In deep and daily prayers would'st strive  
To reconcile me with thy God.  
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
At heart, thou wouldest murmur still—  
“Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.”  
Would'st tell me I must brook the rod.

And chastisement of human pride ;  
 That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
 Betwixt me and the light of God !  
 That hitherto I had defied  
 And had rejected God—that grace  
 Would drop from His o'erbrimming love,  
 As manna on my wilderness,  
 If I would pray—that God would move  
 And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence  
 Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
 Would issue tears of penitence  
 Which would keep green hope's life.    Alas !  
 I think that pride hath now no place  
 Nor sojourn in me.    I am void,  
 Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then?    Why not yet  
 Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
 Hath moor'd and rested?    Ask the sea  
 At midnight, when the crisp slope waves  
 After a tempest, rib and fret  
 The broad-imbasèd beach, why he  
 Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?  
 Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
 And ripples of an inland mere?  
 Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
 Draw down into his vexèd pools  
 All that blue heaven which hues and paves  
 The other?    I am too forlorn,  
 Too shaken : my own weakness fools  
 My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
 Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

“ Yet,” said I, in my morn of youth,  
 The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,  
 When I went forth in quest of truth,  
 “ It is man's privilege to doubt,



If so be that from doubt at length,  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,  
An image with profulgent brows,  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The hornèd valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills  
In summer heats, with placid lows  
Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
About his hoof. And in the flocks  
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
And raceth freely with his fere,  
And answers to his mother's calls  
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,  
Of which he wots not, run short pains  
Through his warm heart, and then, from whence  
He knows not, on his light there falls  
A shadow ; and his native slope,  
Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
And something in the darkness draws  
His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope  
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
Living, but that he shall live on?  
Shall we not look into the laws  
Of life and death, and things that seem,  
And things that be, and analyse  
Our double nature, and compare  
All creeds till we have found the one,  
If one there be?" Ay me! I fear  
All may not doubt, but everywhere  
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,



## THE OWL.

21

Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove  
Shadow me over, and my sins  
Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet  
Somewhat before the heavy clod  
Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!  
O spirit and heart made desolate!  
O damnèd vacillating state!

## SONG -THE OWL.

WHEN cats run home and light is come  
And dew is cold upon the ground,  
And the far-off stream is dumb,  
And the whirring sail goes round,  
And the whirring sail goes round;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

### II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,  
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch  
Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
Alone and warming his five wits,  
The white owl in the belfry sits.

## SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

## I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
 Which upon the dark afloat,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 That her voice untuneful grown,  
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

## II.

I would mock thy chaunt anew :  
 But I cannot mimick it ;  
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free,  
 In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
 The forward-flowing tide of time ;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
 High-walled gardens green and old ;  
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Afloat my shallop, rustling through  
The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove  
The citron-shadows in the blue :  
By garden porches on the brim,  
The costly doors flung open wide,  
Gold glittering through lamplight dim  
And broider'd sofas on each side :

In sooth it was a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans guard  
The outlet, did I turn away  
The boat-head down a broad canal  
From the main river sluiced, where all  
The sloping of the moonlit sward  
Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept  
Adown to where the water slept.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
Ridg'd the smooth level, bearing on  
My shallop through the star-strown caim.  
Until another night in night  
I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they climb  
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome

Of hollow boughs.--A goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal  
Is rounded to as clear a lake.



From the green rivage many a fall  
 Of diamond rillels musical,  
 Through little crystal arches low  
 Down from the central fountain's flow  
 Fall'n silver-chiming, seem'd to shake  
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.  
     A goodly place, a goodly time,  
     For it was in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above through many a bowery turn  
 A walk with vary-colour'd shells  
 Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
 All round about the fragrant marge  
 From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
 In order, eastern flowers large,  
 Some dropping low their crimson bells  
 Half-clos'd, and others studded wide  
     With disks and tiars, fed the time  
     With odour in the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon-grove  
 In closest coverture upsprung,  
 The living airs of middle night  
 Died round the bulbul as he sung ;  
 Not he : but something which possess'd  
 The darkness of the world, delight,  
 Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
 Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,  
     Apart from place, withholding time  
     But flattering the golden prime  
     Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
 Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged  
 Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :  
 A sudden splendour from behind

Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green  
And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame :  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence through the garden I was drawn---  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round  
The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honour of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares  
From the long alley's lattic'd shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.

Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
    After the fashion of the time,  
    And humour of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
    Of night new-risen, that marvellous time  
    To celebrate the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gaz'd on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone •  
    The sweetest lady of the time,  
    Well worthy of the golden prime  
    Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which  
Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,



Engarlanded and diaper'd  
 With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.  
 Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
 With merriment of kingly pride,  
     Sole star of all that place and time,  
 I saw him--in his golden prime,  
     THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID !

## ODE TO MEMORY.

Thou who stealest fire,  
 From the fountains of the past,  
 To glorify the present ; oh, haste,  
     Visit my low desire !  
 Strengthen me, enlighten me !  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## II.

Come not as thou camest of late,  
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
 On the white day ; but robed in soften'd light  
     Of orient state.  
 Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
 Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
 The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd  
     When she, as thou,  
 Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight  
 Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots  
 Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,  
 Which in wintertide shall star  
 The black earth with brilliance rare.

## III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,  
And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast  
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind  
Never grow sere,  
When rooted in the garden of the mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the year).  
Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest  
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.  
The eddying of her garments caught from thee  
The light of thy great presence ; and the cope  
Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
Though deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars which tremble  
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.  
Small thought was there of life's distress ;  
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull  
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :  
Sure she was nigher to heaven's spheres,  
Listening the lordly music flowing from  
The illimitable years.  
O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes !  
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines  
Unto mine inner eye,  
Divinest Memory !  
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall  
Which ever sounds and shines  
A pillar of white light upon the wall

Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :  
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,  
The seven elms, the poplars four  
That stand beside my father's door,  
And chiefly from the brook that loves  
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,  
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
    In every elbow and turn,  
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland.  
    O ! hither lead thy feet !  
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat  
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,  
    Upon the ridged wolds,  
When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud  
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
What time the amber morn  
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

## V.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
To the young spirit present  
    When first she is wed ;  
    And like a bride of old  
In triumph led,  
    With music and sweet showers  
    Of festal flowers,  
Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,  
In setting round thy first experiment  
    With royal framework of wrought gold ;  
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,  
And foremost in thy various gallery  
    Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls  
    Upon the storied walls ;  
    For the discovery



And newness of thine art so pleased thee,  
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest  
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
With thee unto the love thou bearest  
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,  
Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
On the prime labour of thine early days :  
No matter what the sketch might be ;  
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,  
Or even a sand-built ridge  
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,  
Where from the frequent bridge,  
Like emblems of infinity,  
The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;  
Or a garden bower'd close  
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
Long alleys falling down to twilight grotts  
Or opening upon level plots  
Of crowned lilies, standing near  
Purple-spiked lavender :  
Whither in after life retired  
From brawling storms,  
From weary wind,  
With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
We may hold converse with all forms  
Of the many-sided mind,  
And those whom passion hath not blinded,  
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.  
My friend, with you to live alone,  
Were how much better than to own  
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !  
O strengthen me, enlighten me !  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG.

## I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers •  
     To himself he talks ;  
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
 At his work you may hear him sob and sigh  
     In the walks ;  
     Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks  
 Of the mouldering flowers :  
     Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
     Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;  
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
     Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
 As a sick man's room when he taketh repose  
     An hour before death ;  
 My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves  
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves.  
     And the breath  
     Of the fading edges of box beneath,  
 And the year's last rose.  
     Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
     Over its grave i' the earth so chilly :  
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
     Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

## ADELINE.

## I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
 Faintly smiling Adeline.  
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,

Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
But beyond expression fair  
With thy floating flaxen hair,  
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
Take the heart from out my breast.  
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine  
Like a lily which the sun  
Looks through in his sad decline,  
And a rose-bush leans upon,  
Thou that faintly smilest still,  
As a Naiad in a well,  
Looking at the set of day,  
Or a phantom two hours old  
Of a maiden past away,  
Ere the placid lips be cold?  
Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline?

## III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
For sure thou art not all alone:  
Do beating hearts of salient springs  
Keep measure with thine own?  
Hast thou heard the butterflies  
What they say betwixt their wings?  
Or in stillest evenings  
With what voice the violet woos  
To his heart the silver dew?  
Or when little airs arise.  
How the merry bluebell rings  
To the mosses underneath?



Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
Of the lilies at sunrise?  
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
Some spirit of a crimson rose  
In love with thee forgets to close  
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
All night long on darkness blind.  
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou  
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

## V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
When thou gazest at the skies?  
Doth the low-tongued Orient  
Wander from the side of the morn.  
Dripping with Sabæan spice  
On thy pillow, lowly bent  
With melodious airs lovelorn,  
Breathing Light against thy face,  
While his locks a-dropping twined  
Round thy neck in subtle ring  
Make a carcanet of rays,  
And ye talk together still,  
In the language wherewith Spring  
Letters cowslips on the hill?  
Hence that look and smile of thine,  
Spiritual Adeline.

## A CHARACTER.

With a half-glance, upon the sky  
At night he said, "The wanderings  
Of this most intricate Universe  
Teach me the nothingness of things."  
Yet could not all creation pierce  
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull  
Saw no divinity in grass,  
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;  
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,  
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods  
More purely, when they wish to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by :  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour  
He canvass'd human mysteries,  
And trod on silk, as if the winds  
Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
And stood aloof from other minds  
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
Himself unto himself he sold :  
Upon himself himself did feed :  
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
And other than his form of creed,  
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

## THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,  
    With golden stars above ;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn or scorn,  
    The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good and ill,  
    He saw through his own soul.  
The marvel of the everlasting will,  
    An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded  
    The secretest walks of fame :  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
    And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue  
    And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,  
    Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
    Them earthward till they lit ;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,  
    The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew  
    Where'er they fell, behold,  
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
    A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling  
    The winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring  
    Of Hope and Youth.



So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,  
    Though one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams  
    Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world  
    Like one great garden snow'd,  
And through the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,  
    Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise  
    Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burning eyes  
    Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes  
    Sunn'd by those orient skies ;  
But round about the circles of the globes  
    Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was trac'd in flame  
    WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred name.  
    And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,  
    And as the lightning to the thunder  
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,  
    Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword  
    Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word  
    She shook the world.

## THE POET'S MIND.

## I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind  
With thy shallow wit :  
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;  
For thou canst not fathom it.  
Clear and bright it should be ever,  
Flowing like a crystal river ;  
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

## II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;  
All the place is holy ground ;  
Hollow smile and frozen sneer  
Come not here.  
Holy water will I pour  
Into every spicy flower.  
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.  
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.  
In your eye there is death,  
There is frost in your breath  
Which would blight the plants.  
Where you stand you cannot hear  
From the groves within  
The wild-bird's din.  
In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants ;  
It would fall to the ground if you came in.  
In the middle leaps a fountain  
Like sheet lightning,  
Ever brightening  
With a low melodious thunder ;  
All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple mountain  
Which stands in the distance yonder :  
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,

And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,  
 And it sings a song of undying love ;  
 And yet, though its voice be so clear and full,  
 You never would hear it ; your ears are so dull ;  
 So keep where you are ; you are foul with sin.  
 It would shrink to the earth if you came in.

### NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be weary of flowing  
     Under my eye ?  
 When will the wind be weary of blowing  
     Over the sky ?  
 When will the clouds be weary of fleeting ?  
 When will the heart be weary of beating ?  
     And nature die ?  
 Never, oh ! never, nothing will die ;  
     The stream flows,  
     The wind blows,  
     The cloud fleets,  
     The heart beats,  
     Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;  
     All things will change  
 Through eternity.  
     'Tis the world's winter ;  
     Autumn and summer  
     Are gone long ago ;  
 Earth is dry to the centre,  
     But spring, a new comer,  
 A spring rich and strange,  
     Shall make the winds blow  
 Round and round,  
     Through and through,  
     Here and there,  
     Till the air



And the ground  
Shall be filled with life anew.

The world was never made ;  
It will change, but it will not fade.  
So let the wind range ;  
For even and morn  
Ever will be  
Through eternity.  
Nothing was born ;  
Nothing will die ;  
All things will change.

## ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing  
Under my eye ;  
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing  
Over the sky.  
One after another the white clouds are fleeting ;  
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating  
Full merrily ;  
Yet all things must die.  
The stream will cease to flow ;  
The wind will cease to blow ;  
The clouds will cease to fleet ;  
The heart will cease to beat ;  
For all things must die.

All things must die.  
Spring will come never more.  
Oh ! vanity !  
Death waits at the door.  
See ! our friends are all forsaking  
The wine and the merry-making.  
We are called—we must go.  
Laid low, very low,

## EARLY POEMS.

In the dark we must lie.  
 The merry glees are still ;  
 The voice of the bird  
 Shall no more be heard,  
 Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh ! misery !  
 Hark ! death is calling  
 While I speak to ye,  
 The jaw is falling,  
 The red cheek paling,  
 The strong limbs failing ;  
 Ice with the warm blood mixing ;  
 The eyeballs fixing.  
 Nine times goes the passing bell :  
 Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth  
 Had a birth,  
 As all men know,  
 Long ago.

And the old earth must die.  
 So let the warm winds range,  
 And the blue wave beat the shore ;  
 For even and morn  
 Ye will never see  
 Through eternity.  
 All things were born.  
 Ye will come never more,  
 For all things must die.

## THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,  
 Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,  
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest  
 To little harps of gold ; and while they mused,  
 Whispering to each other half in fear,  
 Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away? fly no more.  
Whither away from the high green field, and the happy  
    blossoming shore?  
Day and night to the billow the fountain calls;  
Down shower the gambolling waterfalls  
From wandering over the lea:  
Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,  
And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells  
High over the full-toned sea:  
O hither, come hither and furl your sails,  
Come hither to me and to me:  
Hither, come hither and frolic and play;  
Here it is only the mew that wails;  
We will sing to you all the day:  
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
For here are the blissful downs and dales  
And merrily merrily carol the gales,  
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,  
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land  
Over the islands free;  
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand;  
Hither, come hither and see;  
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,  
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,  
And sweet shall your welcome be:  
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,  
For merry brides are we:  
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words:  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
With pleasure and love and jubilee:  
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords  
Runs up the ridged sea.  
Who can light on as happy a shore  
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?  
Whither away? listen and stay: mariner, mariner, fly no more.



## THE DESERTED HOUSE.

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
Side by side,  
Leaving door and windows wide :  
Careless tenants they !

## II.

All within is dark as night :  
In the windows is no light ;  
And no murmur at the door,  
So frequent on its hinge before.

## III.

Close the door, the shutters close,  
Or through the windows we shall see  
The nakedness and vacancy  
Of the dark deserted house.

## IV.

Come away : no more of mirth  
Is here or merry-making sound.  
The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## V.

Come away : for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell ;  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have stayed with us !

## THE DYING SWAN.

THE plain was grassy, wild, and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
    An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
    And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
    And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh ;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
    Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
    And far through the marish green and still  
    The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shut over with purple, and green, and yellow.

## III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and clear ;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole  
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;  
But anon her awful jubilant voice,

With a music strange and manifold,  
 Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;  
 As when a mighty people rejoice  
 With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold.  
 And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd  
 Through the open gates of the city afar,  
 To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.  
 And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,  
 And the willow-branches hoar and dank,  
 And the wavy swell of the sougling reeds,  
 And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,  
 And the silvery marish-flowers that throng  
 The desolate creeks and pools among,  
 Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE

### I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;  
 Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
 Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
     Let them rave.  
 Shadows of the silver birk  
 Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
     Let them rave.

### II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;  
 Nothing but the small cold worm  
 Fretteth thine enshrouded form.  
     Let them rave.  
 Light and shadow ever wander  
 O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
     Let them rave.



## III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;  
Chaunteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny ?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave

Let them rave.

## IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;  
The woodbine and eglare  
Drip sweeter dew than traitor's tear.

Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep.  
Bramble-roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.

Let them rave.

These in every shower creep  
Through the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.

Let them rave.

Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

## VII.

Wild words wander here and there ;  
 God's great gift of speech abused  
 Makes thy memory confused :  
     But let them rave.  
 The balm-cricket carols clear  
 On the green that folds thy grave.  
     Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light  
 Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,  
 And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ;  
 When, turning round a cassia, full in view,  
 Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,  
 And talking to himself, first met his sight :  
 " You must begone," said Death, " these walks are mine."  
 Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight ;  
 Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is thine :  
 Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree  
 Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,  
 So in the light of great eternity  
 Life eminent creates the shade of death :  
 The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,  
 But I shall reign for ever over all."

## THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep ;  
 Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep  
 The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sunlights flee  
 About his shadowy sides : above him swell  
 Huge sponges of millennial growth and height ;

And far away into the sickly light,  
 From many a wondrous grot and secret cell  
 Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
 Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.  
 There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
 Battenning upon huge seaworms in his sleep,  
 Until the latter fire shall heat the deep ;  
 The once by man and angels to be seen,  
 In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
                   Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,  
                   Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow  
 And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,  
                   Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,  
                   Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,  
                   Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,  
                   Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
 We heard the steeds to battle going,  
                   Oriana :

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
                   Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,  
                   Oriana.

Ere I rode into the fight,  
                   Oriana,



While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
Oriana :  
She watch'd my crest among them all,  
Oriana :  
She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
Oriana,  
Atween me and the castle wall,  
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana :  
The damned arrow glanc'd aside,  
And pierc'd thy heart, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !  
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space.  
Oriana.  
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
Oriana.  
Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
Oriana ;  
But I was down upon my face,  
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
    Oriana !  
How could I rise and come away,  
    Oriana ?  
How could I look upon the day ?  
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,  
    Oriana—  
They should have trod me into clay,  
    Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
    Oriana !  
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
    Oriana !  
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak ;  
And then the tears run down my cheek,  
    Oriana :  
What wantest thou ? whom dost thou seek,  
    Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,  
    Oriana.  
Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
    Oriana.  
I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
    Oriana.  
Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
    Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !  
    Oriana !  
O happy thou that liest low,  
    Oriana !  
All night the silence seems to flow

## EARLY POEMS.

Beside me in my utter woe,  
Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,  
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,  
Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,  
Oriana.

## CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbour villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy leas ;  
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;  
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;  
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower  
Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blossomed ;  
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;  
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.

## WE ARE FREE.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
Leaning upon the ridgèd sea,  
Breathed low around the rolling earth  
With mellow preludes, " We are free ; "  
The streams through many a lilied row,  
Down-carolling to the crispèd sea,  
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
Atween the blossoms, " We are free."



## SONNET.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and free,  
Like some broad river rushing down alone,  
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown  
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea :—  
Which with increasing might doth forward flee  
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,  
And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.  
Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;  
Even as the great gulf-stream of Florida  
Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

## BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,  
Madman !—to chain with chains, and bind with bands  
That island queen who sways the floods and lands  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,  
When from her wooden walls, lit by sure hands,  
With thunders and with lightnings and with smoke,  
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore  
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden fires  
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once more  
We taught him : late he learned humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with briers.

## SONNET.

BUT were I loved, as I desire to be,  
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,  
And range of evil between death and birth,  
That I should fear—if I were loved by thee?  
All the inner, all the outer world of pain  
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine  
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,  
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.  
'Twere joy, not fear, clasped hand in hand with thee,  
To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,  
Apart upon a mountain, though the surge  
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills  
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge  
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

## SONNET TO J. M. K.

MY hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be  
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the Master's feast  
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee ;  
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,  
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily ;  
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy cause  
With iron-worded proof hating, to hark  
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone  
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk  
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne  
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark  
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

## PART I.

ON either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;  
And through the field the road runs by  
    To many-tower'd Camelot ;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
    The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
Little breezes dusk and shiver  
Through the wave that runs for ever  
By the island in the river  
    Flowing down to Camelot.  
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
Overlook a space of flowers,  
And the silent isle embowers  
    The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
Slide the heavy barges trail'd  
By slow horses ; and unhail'd  
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
    Skinming down to Camelot :  
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?  
Or at the casement seen her stand ?  
Or is **she** known in all the land,  
    The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early  
In among the bearded barley,



Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly,  
     Down to tower'd Camelot :  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,  
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy  
     Lady of Shalott."

## PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colours gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
     To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
     Winding down to Camelot :  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
     Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
     Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;  
 And sometimes through the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two :  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
     The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
For often through the silent nights  
A funeral, with plumes and lights,  
And music, went to Camelot :  
Or when the moon was overhead,  
Came two young lovers lately wed ;—  
“ I am half sick of shadows,” said  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III.

A ROW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
He rode between the barley-sheaves ;  
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,  
And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
Of bold Sir Lancelot.  
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot :  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armour rung  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,  
The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot :

As often through the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
"Tirra lirra," by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces through the room.  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide ;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side :  
"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad stream in his banks complaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining  
Over tower'd Camelot ;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*



And down the river's dim expanse—  
Like some bold seër in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance—  
With a glassy countenance

Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day  
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,

The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white  
That loosely flew to left and right—  
The leaves upon her falling light—  
Through the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot:

And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,

The Lady of Shalott—

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,

Turn'd to tower'd Camelot

For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side.

Singing in her song she died,

The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,

Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her name,

*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this, and what is here?  
 And in the lighted palace near  
 Died the sound of royal cheer;  
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
     All the knights at Camelot:  
 But Lancelot mused a little space;  
 He said, "She has a lovely face;  
 God in His mercy lend her grace,  
     The Lady of Shalott."

### MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

With one black shadow at its feet,  
 The house through all the level shines,  
 Close-latticed to the brooding heat,  
 And silent in its dusty vines:  
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
 An empty river-bed before,  
 And shallows on a distant shore,  
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
     But "Ave Mary," made she moan,  
     And "Ave Mary," night and morn,  
     And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,  
     To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
 From brow and bosom slowly down  
 Through rosy taper fingers drew  
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown  
 To left and right, and made appear,  
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
 Her melancholy eyes divine,  
 The home of woe without a tear.  
     And "Ave Mary," was her mean,  
     "Madonna, sad is night and morn;"  
     And "Ah," she sang, "to be all along,  
     To live forgotten, and love forlorn."



Till all the crimson changed, and past  
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,  
 Low on her knees herself she cast,  
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;  
 Complaining, " Mother, give m' grace  
 To help me of my weary load."  
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
 The clear perfection of her face.

" Is this the form," she made her moan,  
 " That won his praises night and morn ? "  
 And " Ah," she said, " but I wake alone,  
 I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,  
 Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
 But day increased from heat to heat,  
 On stony drought and steaming salt ;  
 Till now at noon she slept again,  
 And seem'd kuce-deep in mountain grass,  
 And heard her native breezes pass,  
 And runlets babbling down the glen.

She breathed in sleep a lower moan,  
 And murmuring, as at night and morn,  
 She thought, " My spirit is here alone,  
 Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :  
 She felt he was and was not there.  
 She woke : the babble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare  
 Shrank one sick willow sere and small.  
 The river-bed was dusty-white ;  
 And all the furnace of the light  
 Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
 More inward than at night or morn,  
 " Sweet Mother, let me not here alone  
 Live forgotten and die forlorn."



And, rising, from her bosom drew  
Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,  
To what is loveliest upon earth."

An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look at her with slight, and say,  
"But now thy beauty flows away,  
So be alone for evermore."

"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,  
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,  
Is this the end to be left alone,  
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day  
An image seem'd to pass the door,  
To look into her eyes and say,  
"But thou shalt be alone no more."

And flaming downward over all  
From heat to heat the day decreased.  
And slowly rounded to the east  
The one black shadow from the wall.

"The day to night," she made her moan.  
"The day to night, the night to morn,  
And day and night I am left alone  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,  
There came a sound as of the sea ;  
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
And lean'd upon the balcony.  
There all in spaces rosy-bright  
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
And deepening through the silent spheres,  
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made her moan,  
"The night comes on that knows not morn,  
When I shall cease to be all alone,  
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

## ELEANORE.

## I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,  
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,  
For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,  
Moulded thy baby thought.  
Far off from human neighbourhood,  
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,  
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd  
With breezes from our oaken glades,  
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land  
Of lavish lights, and floating shades :  
And flattering thy childish thought  
The oriental fairy brought,  
At the moment of thy birth,  
From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
And the hearts of purple hills,  
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,  
The choicest wealth of all the earth,  
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,  
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
Through half-open lattices  
Coming in the scented breeze,  
Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd—  
A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,  
With the hum of swarming bees  
Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III.

Who may minister to thee?  
 Summer herself should minister  
     To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
     On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
 Grape-thicken'd, from the light, and blinded  
     With many a deep-hued bell-like flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
     Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
     And the crag that fronts the Even;  
     All along the shadowing shore,  
 Crimsons over an inland mere,  
     Eleänore!

## IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,  
     How may measured words adore  
     The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
     Eleänore?  
     The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness,  
     Eleänore?  
     Every turn and glance of thine,  
     Every lineament divine  
     Eleänore,  
     And the steady sunset glow,  
     That stays upon thee? For in thee  
     Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
 Like two streams of incense free  
     From one censer, in one shrine,  
     Thought and motion mingle,  
 Mingle ever. Motions flow  
 To one another, even as though  
 They were modulated so  
     To an unheard melody,



Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
Of richest pauses, evermore  
Drawn from each other mellow-deep ;  
Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

## V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;  
I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
Daily and hourly, more and more.  
I muse, as in a trance, the while  
Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
I muse, as in a trance, whenc'er  
The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
Float on to me. I would I were  
So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
To stand apart, and to adore,  
Gazing on thee for evermore,  
Serene, imperial Eleänore !

## VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity  
Gazing, I seem to see  
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,  
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,  
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
But am as nothing in its light :  
As though a star, in inmost heaven set,  
Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow  
To a full face, there like a sun remain  
Fix'd—then as slowly fade again,  
And draw itself to what it was before ;  
So full, so deep, so slow,  
Thought seems to come and go  
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore

## VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
     Roor'd the world with doubt and fear,  
 Floating through an evening atmosphere,  
 Grow golden all about the sky ;  
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,  
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might  
     In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
     And luxury of contemplation :  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
     Rolling slide, and lying still  
     Shadow forth the banks at will :  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
     Pressing up against the land  
     With motions of the outer sea :  
     And the selfsame influence  
     Controlleth all the soul and sense  
     Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
     Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding thee,  
     And so would languish evermore,  
     Serene, imperial Eleänore.

## VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
     Breathes low between the sunset and the moon ;  
     Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined ;  
     I watch thy grace ; and in its place  
     My heart a charmed slumber keeps,  
     While I muse upon thy face ;  
     And a languid fire creeps

Through my veins to all my frame,  
Dissolvingly and slowly : soon  
From thy rose-red lips MY name  
Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
With dinning sound my ears are rife,  
My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,  
I drink the cup of a costly death,  
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.  
! die with my delight, before  
I hear what I would hear from thee ;  
Yet tell my name again to me,  
*I would* be dying evermore,  
So dying ever, Eleänore.

## THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead dryly curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?  
  
In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver cup--  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.  
  
Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.



There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of pain.  
Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again.  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy  
Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire:  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken through  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove  
In firry woodlands making moan;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—  
Still hither thither idly sway'd,  
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear  
The mill-dam rushing down with noise  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,

The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,  
When after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their buds  
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;  
And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,  
An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood  
I watch'd the little circles die ;  
They pass'd into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye ;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,  
That morning, on the casement's edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the ledge :

And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met two so full and bright—  
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear  
That I should die an early death :  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.  
My mother thought, What ails the boy?  
For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam  
Through quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,  
When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below ;  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;  
And " By that lamp," I thought, " she sits !"  
The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.



“Oh that I were beside her now !  
Oh will she answer if I call ?  
Oh would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?”

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;  
And, in the pauses of the wind,  
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;  
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.  
At last you rose and moved the light,  
And the long shadow of the chair  
Flitted across into the night,  
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,  
The lanes, you know, were white with may,  
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek  
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;  
And so it was - half-sly, half-shy,  
You would, and would not, little one !  
Although I pleaded tenderly,  
And you and I were ail alone.

And slowly was my mother brought  
To yield consent to my desire ;  
She wish'd me happy, but she thought  
I might have look'd a little higher ;  
And I was young--too young to wed :  
“ Yet must I love her for your sake ;  
Go fetch your Alice here,” she said :  
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :  
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;  
This dress and that by turns you tried,  
Too fearful that you should not please.

I loved you better for your fears,  
 I knew you could not look but well ;  
 And dew, that would have fall'n in tears  
 I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,  
 The doubt my mother would not see ;  
 She spoke at large of many things,  
 And at the last she spoke of me ;  
 And turning look'd upon your face,  
 As near this door you sat apart,  
 And rose, and, with a silent grace  
 Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song  
 I gave you, Alice, on the day  
 When, arm in arm, we went along,  
 A pensive pair, and you were gay  
 With bridal flowers—that I may seem,  
 As in the nights of old, to lie  
 Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,  
 While these full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,  
 And she is grown so dear, so dear,  
 That I would be the jewel  
 That trembles at her ear ;  
 For hid in ringlets day and night,  
 I'd touch her neck so warm and white.  
 And I would be the girdle  
 About her dainty dainty waist,  
 And her heart would beat against me,  
 In sorrow and in rest :  
 And I should know if it beat right,  
 I'd clasp it round so close and tight.  
 And I would be the necklace,  
 And all day long to fall and rise  
 Upon her balmy bosom,  
 With her laughter or her sighs,  
 And I would lie so light, so light,  
 I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet ! which true love spells—  
True love interprets—right alone.  
His light upon the letter dwells,  
For all the spirit is his own.  
So, if I waste words now, in truth  
You must blame Love. His early rage  
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,  
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,  
Like mine own life to me thou art,  
Where Past and Present, wound in one,  
Do make a garland for the heart :  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
The day when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,  
Can he pass, and we forget ?  
Many suns arise and set,  
Many a chance the years beget,  
Love the gift is Love the debt,  
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret,  
Love is made a vague regret,  
Eyes with idle tears are wet,  
Idle habit links us yet,  
What is love ? for we forget :  
Ah, no ! no !

Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife  
Round my true heart thine arms entwine ;  
My other dearer life in life,  
Look through my very soul with thine !  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes for ever dwell !  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.



Yet tears they shed : they had their part  
 Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,  
 The still affection of the heart  
 Became an outward breathing type,  
 That into stillness pass'd again,  
 And left a want unknown before ;  
 Although the loss that brought us pain.  
 That loss but made us love the more.

With farther lookings on. The kiss.  
 The woven arms, seem but to be  
 Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
 The comfort, I have found in thee.  
 But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought  
 Two spirits to one equal mind—  
 With blessings beyond hope or thought,  
 With blessings which no one can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
 To yon old mill across the wolds ;  
 For look, the sunset, south and north,  
 Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
 And fires your narrow casement glass,  
 Touching the sullen pool below ;  
 On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
 Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

## FATIMA.

O LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !  
 O sun, that from thy noonday height  
 Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
 Throbbing through all thy heat and light,  
 Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
 Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,  
 I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers :  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :  
I roll'd among the tender flowers :  
    I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth :  
    I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
    Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,  
From my swift blood that went and came  
A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
    O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
    With one long kiss my whole soul through  
    My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly : from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow  
Before him, striking on my brow.  
    In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
    Down-deepening from swoon to swoon  
    Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire  
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
    And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
    My heart, pierc'd through with fierce delight  
    Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I *will* possess him or will die.  
    I will grow round him in his place,  
    Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
    Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.



## ÆNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen.  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
The long brook falling through the clov'n ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.

Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning : but in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon

Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck  
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.    ~  
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the cicala sleeps.  
The purple flowers droop : the golden bee  
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.  
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,  
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,  
And I am all aweary of my life.



“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves  
 That house the cold crown'd snake ! O mountain brooks,  
 I am the daughter of a River-God,  
 Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all  
 My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls  
 Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,  
 A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be  
 That, while I speak of it, a little while  
 My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,  
 And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :  
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hoov'd.  
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

“ O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft :  
 Far up the solitary morning smote  
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes  
 I sat alone : white-breasted like a star  
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin  
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair  
 Cluster'd about his temples like a God's ;  
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens  
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart  
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm  
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,  
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd

And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech .  
Came down upon my heart.

“ ‘ My own CEnone,  
Beautiful-brow'd CEnone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n  
“ For the most fair,” would seem to award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added, ‘ This was cast upon the board,  
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods  
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon  
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due :  
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common voice  
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave  
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,  
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard  
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
It was the deep midnoon : one silvery cloud  
Had lost his way between the piney sides  
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,  
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,  
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,  
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With bunch and berry and flower through and through.



“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
 And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd  
 Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.  
 Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom  
 Coming through Heaven, like a light that grows  
 Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods  
 Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made  
 Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestioned, overflowing revenue  
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'From many a vale  
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,  
 Or labour'd mines undrainable of ore.  
 Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,  
 From many an inland town and haven large,  
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel  
 In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

“O mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Still she spake on, and still she spake of power,  
 'Which in all action is the end of all ;  
 Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred  
 And thron'd of wisdom—from all neighbour crowns  
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
 A shepherd all thy life, but yet king-born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

“Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit  
 Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power  
 Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood,



Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest eye  
 Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ ‘ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall'd for), but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear ;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’ ”

“ Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
 Again she said : ‘ I woo thee not with gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward through a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,  
 Circled through all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom.’ ”

“ Here she ceased,  
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, ‘ O Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas ! ’ but he heard me not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,  
 With rosy slender fingers backward drew  
 From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair  
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat  
 And shoulder : from the violets her light foot  
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form  
 Between the shadows of the vine-bunches  
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,  
 The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh  
 Half-whispered in his ear, ‘ I promise thee  
 The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.’  
 She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight for fear :  
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,  
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower ;  
 And from that time to this I am alone,  
 And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.  
 Fairest—why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?  
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
 When I pass'd by, a wild and wanton pard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?  
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.



“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,  
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge  
High over the blue gorge, and all between  
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract  
Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath  
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn,  
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat  
Low in the valley. Never, never more  
Shall lone Ænone see the morning mist  
Sweep through them ; never see them overlaid  
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,  
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,  
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,  
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,  
The Abominable, that uninvited came  
Into the fair Peleian banquet-hall,  
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,  
And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind.  
And tell her to her face how much I hate  
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,  
In this green valley, under this green hill,  
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?  
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?  
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !  
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?  
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?  
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,  
There are enough unhappy on this earth,  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :  
I pray thee, pass before my light of life.



And shadow all my soul, that I may die.  
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,  
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
Conjectures of the features of her child  
Ere it is born : her child ! - a shudder comes  
Across me : never child be born of me,  
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes !

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me  
Walking the cold and starless road of Death  
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go  
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth  
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says  
A fire dances before her, and a sound  
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
What this may be I know not, but I know  
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,  
All earth and air seem only burning fire.”

## THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race :  
She was the fairest in the face :

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
They were together, and she fell ;  
Therefore revenge became me well.

O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :  
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.  
The wind is howling in turret and tree.  
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,  
To win his love I lay in wait.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come ;  
I won his love, I brought him home.  
The wind is roaring in turret and tree  
And after supper, on a bed,  
Upon my lap he laid his head.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
The wind is raging in turret and tree.  
I hated him with the hate of hell,  
But I loved his beauty passing well.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :  
I made my dagger sharp and bright.  
The wind is raving in turret and tree.  
As half-asleep his breath he drew,  
Three times I stabb'd him through and through.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,  
He look'd so grand when he was dead.  
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.  
I wrapt his body in the sheet,  
And laid him at his mother's feet.  
O the Earl was fair to see !

## TO

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,  
(For you will understand it) of a soul,  
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,  
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
That did love Beauty only (Beauty seen  
In all varieties of mould and mind),  
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,  
Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters  
That dote upon each other, friends to man,  
Living together under the same roof,  
And never can be sunder'd without tears.  
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,  
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears  
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.  
I said, " O Soul, make merry and carouse,  
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass,  
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright  
From level meadow-bases of deep grass  
Suddenly scaled the light.



Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf  
 The rock rose clear, or winding stair.  
 My soul would live alone unto herself  
 In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,  
 "Reign thou apart, a quiet king,  
 Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade  
 Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :  
 "Trust me, in bliss I shall abide  
 In this great mansion, that is built for me,  
 So royal-rich and wide."

\* \* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West, and South, and North,  
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth  
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row  
 Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods.  
 Echoing all night to that sonorous flow  
 Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
 That lent broad verge to distant lands,  
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky  
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell  
 Across the mountain stream'd below  
 In misty folds, that floating as they fell  
 Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd  
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
 A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd  
 From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon  
My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,  
And, while day sank or mounted higher,  
The light ærial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,  
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires  
From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,  
And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,  
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,  
All various, each a perfect whole  
From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,  
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,  
And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves,  
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall  
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
 By herds upon an endless plain,  
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,  
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.  
 In front they bound the sheaves. Behind  
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,  
 And hoary to the wind.

And one, a foreground black with stones and slags,  
 Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
 All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,  
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd  
 On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
 Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
 A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,  
 As fit for every mood of mind,  
 Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,  
 Not less than truth design'd.

\* \* \* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
 In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,  
 Beneath branch-work of costly sardonys  
 Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,  
 Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
 Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;  
 An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise,  
 A group of Houris bow'd to see  
 The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes  
 That said, We wait for thee.



Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a footfall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward borne ;  
From one hand droop'd a crocus ; one hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or 'else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh  
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,  
Sole as a flying star shot through the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,  
Not less than life, design'd.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,  
Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;  
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung  
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong ;  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;  
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest :  
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings ;  
Here play'd a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose an athlete, strong to break or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure :  
And here once more like some sick man declined,  
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells  
Began to chime. She took her throne :  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost Oriels' colour'd flarne  
Two godlike faces gazed below ;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange :

Through which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,  
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,  
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew  
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song  
Throb through the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,  
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself : " All these are mine,  
And let the world have peace or wars,  
'Tis one to me." She—when young night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—  
Lit light in wreathes and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven ; and clapt her hands and cried,  
" I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.

" O all things fair to sate my various eyes !  
O shapes and hues that please me well !  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

" O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine  
That range on yonder plain.



"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin.  
 They graze and wallow, breed and sleep ;  
 And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
 And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate,  
 And of the rising from the dead,  
 As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate :  
 And at the last she said :

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.  
 I care not what the sects may brawl.  
 I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
 But contemplating all."

\* \* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
 Flashed through her as she sat alone,  
 Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,  
 And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd : so three years  
 She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,  
 Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
 Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
 God, before whom ever lie bare  
 The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
 Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight,  
 The airy hand confusion wrought,  
 Wrote "Mene, mene," and divided quite  
 The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude  
 Fell on her, from which mood was born  
 Scorn of herself ; again, from out that mood  
 Laughter at her self-scorn.

“What! is not this my place of strength,” she said,  
“My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid  
Since my first memory?”

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares  
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood.  
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,  
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand;  
Left on the shore; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
“No voice,” she shriek'd in that lone hall,  
“No voice breaks through the stillness of this world:  
One deep, deep silence all!”

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,  
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame.  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,  
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,  
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,  
And ever worse with growing time,  
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow.  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder or a sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry  
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, " I have found  
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, " I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,  
She threw her royal robes away.  
" Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,  
Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
So lightly, beautifully built :  
Perchance I may return with others there  
When I have purged my guilt."



## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,

Of me you shall not win renown :  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired :  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

I know you proud to bear your name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I came.  
Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that dotes on truer charms :  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love,  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,

You put strange memories in my head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have blown:  
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.  
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 When thus he met his mother's view,  
 She had the passions of her kind,  
 She spake some certain truths of you.  
 Indeed I heard one bitter word  
 That scarce is fit for you to hear ;  
 Her manners had not that repose  
 Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
 There stands a spectre in your hall :  
 The guilt of blood is at your door :  
 You changed a wholesome heart to gall.  
 You held your course without remorse,  
 To make him trust his modest worth ;  
 And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
 And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 From yon blue heavens above us bent  
 The grand old gardener and his wife  
 Smile at the claims of long descent.  
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
 'Tis only noble to be good ;  
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
 And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere :  
 You pine among your halls and towers ;  
 The languid light of your proud eyes  
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.  
 In glowing health, with boundless wealth,  
 But sickening of a vague disease,  
 You know so ill to deal with time,  
 You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
 If time be heavy on your hands,  
 Are there no beggars at your gate,  
 Nor any poor about your lands?  
 Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew ;  
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

## THE MAY QUEEN

YOU must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear ;  
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year ;  
 Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day ;  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
 the May.

There's many a black, black eye, they say, but none so bright  
 as mine ;  
 There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline :  
 But none so fair as little Alice in all the land, they say ;  
 So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
 the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,  
 If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break :  
 But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,  
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
 the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,  
 But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree ?  
 He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,—  
 But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
 the May.



He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be :  
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen ;  
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-  
flowers ;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and  
hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass ;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year :  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o'  
the May.

## NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
'Then you may lay me low i' the mould, and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind ;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we had a merry day ;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May ;  
And we danced about the May-pole and in the hazel copse,  
'Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

'There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on the pane :  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high :  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,  
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
When you are warm asleep, mother, and all the world is still.



When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light  
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night ;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now ;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go ;—  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place :  
Though you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face ;  
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night ! when I have said good-night for ever.  
more,

And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door,  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green :  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :  
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden more :  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rose-bush that I set  
About the parlour-window and the box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother : call me before the day is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.



## CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year !  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun ;  
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done !  
But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there !  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head !  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.  
Now, though my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in.  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again, if that could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet :  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call ;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all ;  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear ;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here ;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said ;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, "It's not for them : it's mine."  
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.  
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am pass'd away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret ;  
There's many worthier than I, would make him happy yet.  
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife ;  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow ;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.  
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine —  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done  
The voice that now is speaking may be beyond the sun—  
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—  
And what is life, that we should moan ? why make we such ado ?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—  
And there to wait a little while, till you and Effie come—  
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—  
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.



## THE LOTOS-EATERS.

“COURAGE!” he said, and pointed toward the land,  
“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”  
In the afternoon they came unto a land,  
In which it seemed always afternoon.  
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,  
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,  
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,  
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,  
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,  
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown  
In the red West: through mountain clefts the dale  
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale  
And meadow, set with slender galingale;  
A land where all things always seem'd the same!  
And round about the keel with faces pale,  
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
To each, but whoso did receive of them,  
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave



On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,  
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;  
And deep asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,  
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;  
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore  
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,  
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
Then some one said, " We will return no more ; "  
And all at once they sang, " Our island home  
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."

#### CHORIC SONG.

##### I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls  
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;  
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;  
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.  
Here are cool mosses deep,  
And through the moss the ivies creep,  
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,  
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

##### II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,  
And utterly consum'd with sharp distress,  
While all things else have rest from weariness ?  
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,  
We only toil, who are the first of things,  
And make perpetual moan,

Still from one sorrow to another thrown :  
Nor ever fold our wings,  
And cease from wanderings,  
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;  
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,  
" There is no joy but calm ! "  
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things ?

## III.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,  
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud  
With winds upon the branch, and there  
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow  
Falls, and floats adown the air.  
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,  
Drops in a silent autumn night.  
All its allotted length of days,  
The flower ripens in its place,  
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
Death is the end of life : ah, why  
Should life all labour be ?  
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
Let us alone. What is it that will last ?  
All things are taken from us, and become  
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
To war with evil ? Is there any peace



In ever climbing up the climbing wave?  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
 In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

## V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !  
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;  
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;  
 Eating the Lotos day by day,  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;  
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,  
 With those old faces of our infancy.  
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass?

## VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives  
 And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change ;  
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :  
 Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :  
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
 Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle?  
 Let what is broken so remain.  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile :  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.



There is confusion worse than death,  
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labour unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII.

But propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelids still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine—  
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling  
Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine !  
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

## VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :  
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :  
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :  
Through every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.  
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was  
    seething free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in  
    the sea.  
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd  
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and  
fiery sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and  
praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong ;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil ;  
'Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd, down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar :  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more !

### A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,  
    *The Legend of Good Women*, long ago  
Sung by the morning star of song, who made  
    His music heard below ;  
Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
    Preluded those melodious bursts, that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
    With sounds that echo still.  
And, for a while, the knowledge of his art  
    Held me above the subject, as strong gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining, though my heart,  
    Brimful of those wild tales,  
Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land  
    I saw wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
    The downward slope to death.



Those far-renowned brides of ancient song  
    Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,  
    And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs ;  
    And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;  
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs  
    Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall  
    Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;  
    Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst through with heated blasts  
    That run before the flattering tongues of fire ;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,  
    And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,  
    Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,  
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,  
    And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land  
    Bluster the winds and tides the selfsame way,  
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,  
    Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,  
    Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,  
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,  
    And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down  
    A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town  
    And then, I know not how,



All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought  
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep  
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wandered far  
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew,  
The maiden splendours of the morning star  
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean  
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath  
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,  
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,  
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,  
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,  
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;  
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd  
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,  
And at the root through lush green grasses burn'd  
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew  
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn  
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,  
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,  
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame  
The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear undertone  
Thrill'd through mine ears in that unblissful clime,  
"Pass freely through : the wood is all thine own,  
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,  
Still'er than chisell'd marble, standing there ;  
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise  
Froze my swift speech : she turning on my face  
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,  
Spoke slowly in her place :

"I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :  
No one can be more wise than destiny.  
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came  
I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field  
Myself for such a face had boldly died,  
I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd  
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,  
To her full height her stately stature draws ;  
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse :  
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,  
Which yet to name my spirit loathes and fears :  
My father held his hand upon his face ;  
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with sighs  
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry  
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,  
Waiting to see me die.



“ The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;  
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore ;  
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ;  
Touch'd ; and I knew no more.”

Whereto the other with a downward brow :  
“ I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,  
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,  
Then when I left my home.”

Her slow full words sank through the silence drear,  
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :  
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, “ Come here,  
That I may look on thee.”

I turning saw, thron'd on a flowery rise,  
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;  
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,  
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :  
“ I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd  
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.  
Once, like the moon, I made

“ The ever-shifting currents of the blood  
According to my humour ebb and flow.  
I have no men to govern in this wood :  
That makes my only woe.

“ Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend  
One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye  
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony ?

“ The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime  
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :  
The Nilus would have risen before his time  
And flooded at our nod.



“ We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit  
Lamps which outburn'd Canopus. Oh my life  
In Egypt! oh the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,

“ And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,  
Contented there to die!

“ And there he died: and when I heard my name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear  
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd his fame.  
What else was left? look here!”

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite.)

“ I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,  
A name for ever!—lying rob'd and crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman spouse.”

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided through all change  
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;  
Because with sudden motion from the ground  
She raised her piercing orbs, and filled with light  
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;  
As once they drew into two burning rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts  
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard  
A noise of some one coming through the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested bird,  
That claps his wings at dawn :

“ The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon.  
Sound all night long, in falling through the dell  
Far-heard beneath the moon.

“ The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine ;  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell  
With spires of silver shine.”

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, through the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied  
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow  
Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,  
A maiden pure ; as when she went along  
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : “ Heaven heads the count of crimes  
With that wild oath.” She render'd answer high :  
“ Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times  
I would be born and die.

“ Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root  
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,  
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit  
Changed, I was ripe for death.



“ My God, my land, my father—these did move  
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,  
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love  
Down to a silent grave.

“ And I went mourning, ‘ No fair Hebrew boy  
Shall smile away my maiden blame among  
The Hebrew mothers ’—emptied of all joy,  
Leaving the dance and song,

“ Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,  
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow  
Beneath the battled tower.

“ The light white cloud swam over us. Anon  
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;  
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,  
Or, from the darken'd glen,

“ Saw God divide the night with flying flame,  
And thunder on the everlasting hills.  
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became  
A solemn scorn of ills.

“ When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,  
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire,  
How beautiful a thing it was to die  
For God and for my sire !

“ It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,  
That I subdued me to my father's will ;  
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,  
Sweetens the spirit still.

“ Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer  
On Arnon unto Minnith.” Here her face  
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.



She lock'd her lips : she left me where I stood :  
    "Glory to God," she sang, and pass'd afar,  
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,  
    Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,  
    As one that from a casement leans his head  
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,  
    And the old year is dead.

"Alas ! alas !" a low voice, full of care,  
    Murmur'd beside me : "Turn and look on me :  
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,  
    If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !  
    O me, that I should ever see the light !  
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
    Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust.  
    To whom the Egyptian : "O, you tamely died !  
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust  
    The dagger through her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,  
    Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery  
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams  
    Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark.  
    Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance  
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,  
    A light of ancient France ;

Or her, who knew that Love can vanquish Death,  
    Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,  
    Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep  
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore  
 That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep  
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain  
 Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike  
 Into that wondrous track of dreams again !  
 But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,  
 Desiring what is mingled with past years,  
 In yearnings that can never be exprest  
 By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, though cull'd with choicest art,  
 Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,  
 Wither beneath the palate, and the heart  
 Faints, faded by its heat.

## MARGARET.

## I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
 Like moonlight on a falling shower?  
 Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
 Of pensive thought and aspect pale,  
 Your melancholy sweet and frail  
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?  
 From the westward-winding flood,  
 From the evening-lighted wood,  
 From all things outward you have won  
 A tearful grace, as though you stood  
 Between the rainbow and the sun.

The very smile before you speak,  
That dimples your transparent cheek,  
    Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
The senses with a still delight  
    Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
    Like the tender amber round,  
    Which the moon about her spreadeth,  
Moving through a fleecy night.

## II.

You love, remaining peacefully,  
    To hear the murmur of the strife,  
    But enter not the toil of life.  
Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
    Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
You are the evening star, alway  
    Remaining betwixt dark and bright :  
Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
    Come to you, gleams of mellow light  
    Float by you on the verge of night.

## III.

What can it matter, Margaret,  
    What songs below the waning stars  
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
    Sang looking through his prison bars?  
    Exquisite Margaret, who can tell  
The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
    Just ere the falling axe did part  
    The burning brain from the true heart,  
    Even in her sight he loved so well?

## IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made  
    And gave you on your natal day.  
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
    Keeps real sorrow far away.



You move not in such solitudes,  
 You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,  
 And less æerially blue,  
 But ever trembling through the dew  
 Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

## V.

O sweet pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 Come down, come down, and hear me speak :  
 Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :  
 The sun is just about to set,  
 The arching limes are tall and shady,  
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
 Moving in the leavy beech.  
 Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
 Where all day long you sit between  
 Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
 Or only look across the lawn,  
 Look out below your bower-eaves,  
 Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn  
 Upon me through the jasmine leaves

## ROSALIND.

## I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
 My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
 Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,  
 Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,

My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,  
 Careless both of wind and weather,  
 Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
 Up or down the streaming wind?

## II.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,  
 The shadow rushing up the sea,  
 The lightning flash atween the rains,  
 The sunlight driving down the lea,  
 The leaping stream, the very wind,  
 That will not stay, upon his way,  
 To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
 Is not so clear and bold and free  
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
 You care not for another's pains,  
 Because you are the soul of joy,  
 Bright metal all without alloy.  
 Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,  
 And flashes off a thousand ways,  
 Through lips and eyes in subtle rays.  
 Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,  
 Keen with triumph, watching still  
 To pierce me through with pointed light;  
 And oftentimes they flash and glitter  
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
 And your words are seeming-bitter,  
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
 From excess of swift delight.

## III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
 My gay young hawk, my Rosalind:  
 Too long you keep the upper skies;  
 Too long you roam and wheel at will;  
 But we must hood your random eyes,  
 That care not whom they kill,

And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
Is so sparkling fresh to view,  
Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
Touched with sunrise. We must bind  
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
And clip your wings, and make you love :  
When we have lured you from above,  
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,  
From North to South ;  
We'll bind you fast in silken cords,  
And kiss away the bitter words  
From off your rosy mouth.

## KATE.

I KNOW her by her angry air,  
Her bright black eyes, her bright black hair  
Her rapid laughters wild and shrill,  
As laughter of the woodpecker  
From the bosom of a hill.  
'Tis Kate—she sayeth what she will ;  
For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,  
Clear as the twanging of a harp.  
Her heart is like a throbbing star.  
Kate hath a spirit ever strung  
Like a new bow, and bright and sharp  
As edges of the scymetar.  
Whence shall she take a fitting mate :  
For Kate no common love will feel ;  
My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,  
As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith, " the world is void of might."  
Kate saith, " the men are gilded flies."  
Kate snaps her fingers at my vows ;  
Kate will not hear of lover's sighs.



I would I were an armed knight,  
 Far-famed for well-won enterprise,  
 And wearing on my swarthy brows  
 The garland of new-wreathed emprise :  
 For in a moment I would pierce  
 The blackest files of clanging fight,  
 And strongly strike to left and right,  
 In dreaming of my lady's eyes.  
 Oh ! Kate loves well the bold and fierce ;  
 But none are bold enough for Kate,  
 She cannot find a fitting mate.

## POLAND.

How long, O God, shall man be ridden down,  
 And trampled under by the last and least  
 Of men ? The heart of Poland hath not ceased  
 To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown  
 The fields ; and out of every smouldering town  
 Cries to Thee, lest brute power be increased,  
 Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East  
 Transgress his ample bound to some new crown :—  
 Cries to Thee, " Lord, how long shall these things be ?  
 How long this icy-hearted Muscovite  
 Oppress the region ? " Us, O Just and Good,  
 Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three ;  
 Us, who stand *now*, when we should aid the right—  
 A matter to be wept with tears of blood !

## TO

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,  
 And ebb into a former life, or seem  
 To lapse far back in some confused dream  
 To states of mystical similitude ;

If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,  
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
 So that we say, "All this hath been before,  
 Al' this *hath* been, I know not when or where."  
 So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,  
 Our thought gave answer each to each, so true—  
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—  
 Altho' I knew not in what time or place,  
 Methought that I had often met with you,  
 And each had lived in the other's mind and speech.

## THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:  
 While all the neighbours shoot thee round,  
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,  
 Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
 Are thine; the range of lawn and park:  
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,  
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, though I spared thee all the spring,  
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
 With that gold dagger of thy bill  
 To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,  
 Cold February loved, is dry:  
 Plenty corrupts the melody  
 That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
 Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,  
 I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
 As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing  
 While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
 Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,  
 Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

## DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
 And the winter winds are wearily sighing :  
 Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
 And tread softly and speak low,  
 For the old year lies a-dying.  
     Old year, you must not die ;  
     You came to us so readily,  
     You lived with us so steadily,  
     Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
 He will not see the dawn of day.  
 He hath no other life above.  
 He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,  
 And the New-year will take 'em away.  
     Old year, you must not go ;  
     So long as you have been with us,  
     Such joy as you have seen with us,  
     Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;  
 A jollier year we shall not see.  
 But though his eyes are waxing dim,  
 And though his foes speak ill of him,  
 He was a friend to me.  
     Old year, you shall not die ;  
     We did so laugh and cry with you,  
     I've half a mind to die with you,  
     Old year, if you must die.



He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.

The night is starry and cold, my friend.  
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro :  
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :  
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.

Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :

What is it we can do for you ?

Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack ! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes ; tie up his chin :  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,

And a new face at the door, my friend,

A new face at the door.

## TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows  
More softly round the open wold ;  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,  
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love—something to love  
He lends us ; but, when love is grown  
To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd :  
Once through mine own doors Death did pass ;  
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair is seen  
Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
Rose with you through a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
I honour, and his living worth ;  
A man more pure and bold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.  
Great Nature is more wise than I :  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And though mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit through the brain,  
I will not even preach to you,  
"Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain."

Let Grief be her own mistress still,  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her will  
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, "God's ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind ;"  
For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth?  
Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:  
Both are my friends, and my true breast  
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be  
That holy silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease;  
Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in peace.



Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons increase,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.  
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

You ask me why, though ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas?

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose,  
The land, where girt with friends or foes  
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fulness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive thought  
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Though Power should make from land to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Though every channel of the State  
Should almost choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,  
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet:  
Above her shook the starry lights:  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind;  
But fragments of her mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stopt she down through town and field  
To mingle with the human race,  
And part by part to men reveal'd  
The fulness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,  
From her isle-altar gazing down,  
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
The wisdom of a thousand years  
Is in them. May perpetual youth  
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,  
    Make bright our days and light our dreams.  
Turning to scorn with lips divine  
    The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought  
    From out the storied Past, and used  
    Within the Present, but transfused  
Through future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles.  
    Love that endures not sordid ends,  
    For English natures, freemen, friends,  
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
    Nor feed with crude imaginings  
    The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings  
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
    To weakness, neither hide the ray  
    From those, not blind, who wait for day,  
Though sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;  
    But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
    Before her to whatever sky  
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years  
    Cut Prejudice against the grain :  
    But gentle words are always gain :  
Regard the weakness of thy peers ;



Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
Of pension, neither count on praise :  
It grows to guerdon after-days :  
Nor deal in watchwords overmuch ;

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;  
Not master'd by some modern term ;  
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :  
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—  
Set in all lights by many minds,  
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
And moist and dry, devising long,  
Through many agents making strong.  
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
We all are changed by still degrees,  
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free  
To ingroove itself with that which flies,  
And work, a joint of state, that plies  
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;  
For all the past of Time reveals  
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
Wherever Thought hath wedded **Fact**.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
A motion toiling in the gloom—  
The Spirit of the years to come  
Yearning to mix himself with **Life**.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
Completion in a painful school ;  
Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,  
But vague in vapour, hard to mark ;  
And round them sea and air are dark  
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
Is bodied forth the second whole  
Regard gradation, lest the soul  
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
And heap their ashes on the head ;  
To shame the boast so often made,  
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
Drive men in manhood, as in youth  
To follow flying steps of Truth  
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
And this be true, till Time shall close  
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
To hold his hope through shame and guilt,  
But with his hand against the hilt,  
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, though dogs of Faction bay,  
Would serve his kind in deed and word,  
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,  
That knowledge takes the sword away—

Would love the gleams of good that broke  
From either side, nor veil his eyes :  
And if some dreadful need should rise  
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :  
To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
As we bear blossom of the dead ;  
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed  
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

## THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together ;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.  
He held a goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
“ Here, take the goose, and keep you warm.  
It is a stormy season.”  
She caught the white goose by the leg ,  
A goose—’twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.  
She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbours ;  
And bless’d herself, and curs’d herself,  
And rested from her labours.  
And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied ;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff’d,  
The parson smirk’d and nodded.  
So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder ;  
But ah ! the more the white goose laid  
It clack’d and cackled louder.



It clutter'd here, it chuckled there,  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
"Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,  
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat:  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning;  
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danc'd again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder.

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger!"

# ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS.

## THE EPIC.

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—  
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and pass'd away—  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd : and there we held a talk,  
How all the old honour had from Christmas gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games  
In some odd nooks like this ; till I, tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,  
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,  
Fell in a doze ; and half-awake I heard  
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commissioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism ;  
Until I woke, and found him settled down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right through the world, " At home was little left,  
And none abroad : there was no anchor, none,  
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with " I hold by him."  
" And I," quoth Everard, " by the wassail-bowl."  
" Why yes," I said, " we knew your gift that way  
At college : but another which you had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),  
What came of that ?" " You know," said Frank, " he burnt



His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books "---  
 And then to me demanding why? "Oh, sir,  
 He thought that nothing new was said, or else  
 Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth  
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the day :  
 God knows : he has a mint of reasons : ask.  
 It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,  
 "Why take the style of those heroic times?  
 For nature brings not back the Mastodon,  
 Nor we those times ; and why should any man  
 Remodel models? these twelve books of mine  
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,  
 Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt." "But I "  
 Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh from this hearth  
 And have it : keep a thing, its use will come.  
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."  
 He laugh'd, and I, though sleepy, like a horse  
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears ;  
 For I remember'd Everard's college fame  
 When we were Freshmen : then at my request  
 He brought it ; and the poet little urged,  
 But with some prelude of disparagement,  
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes.  
 Deep-chested music, and to this result.

#### MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter sea ;  
 Until King Arthur's table, man by man,  
 Had fall'n in Lyonesse about their Lord,  
 King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,  
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,  
 A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
 That stood on a dark strait of barren land.



On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere.

“The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights  
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we  
Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made,—  
Though Merlin sware that I should come again  
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten through the helm  
That without help I cannot last till morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,  
Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across  
And took it, and have worn it, like a king :  
And, wheresoever I am sung or told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle mere :  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.”

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :

“It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.”

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept  
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,  
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang  
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down  
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,  
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth  
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt :  
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,  
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work  
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift mind,  
In act to throw : but at the last it seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :  
" Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?  
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
" I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :  
" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd  
Thy fæalty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing  
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time  
Across the ridge, and pac'd beside the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought :



But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote  
His palms together, and he cried aloud.

“And if indeed I cast the brand away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,  
Which might have pleas'd the eyes of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this were done?  
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself?  
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath  
And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,  
Saying, ‘King Arthur’s sword, Excalibur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.’  
So might some old man speak in the aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honour and much fame were lost.”

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time.  
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily :  
“What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

“I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.”

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

“Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!  
Authority forgets a dying king,



Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,  
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights.  
In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou would'st betray me for the precious hilt ;  
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :  
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,  
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged  
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,  
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand  
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,  
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,  
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,  
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock  
By night, with noises of the northern sea.  
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur :  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.  
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :  
" Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.  
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :  
" Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems  
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,  
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,  
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,  
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him ;  
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :  
" My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising, bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, " Quick, quick,  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walk'd  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves  
And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels –  
And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware



That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,  
And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"  
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white  
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon  
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops  
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising sun  
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust ;  
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.  
So like a shatter'd column lay the King ;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tournament,  
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere :  
" Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble knight.  
Such times have been not since the light that led



The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty world ;  
And I, the last, go forth companionless,  
And the days darken round me, and the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge :  
" The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.  
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
I have lived my life, and that which I have done  
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.  
For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?  
For so the whole round earth is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long way  
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)  
'To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long  
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell  
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,  
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we  
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—  
Perhaps some modern touches here and there  
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—  
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;  
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year  
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,  
"There now—that's nothing!" drew a little back,  
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue;  
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,  
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore  
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman  
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,  
"Arthur is come again: he cannot die."  
Then those that stood upon the hills behind  
Repeated—"Come again, and thrice as fair;"  
And, farther inland, voices echoed—"Come  
With all good things, and war shall be no more."  
At this a hundred bells began to peal,  
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn.



THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER; OR,  
THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,  
When I and Eustace from the city went  
To see the Gardener's daughter; I and he,  
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew  
The fable of the city where we dwelt.

My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless moons,  
The summer pilot of an empty heart  
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not  
Such touches are but embassies of love,  
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found  
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,  
And said to me, she sitting with us then,  
“When will *you* paint like this?” and I replied  
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest).  
“’Tis not your work, but Love’s. Love unperceived,  
A more ideal Artist he than all,  
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes  
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair  
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.”  
And Juliet answer’d laughing, “Go and see  
The Gardener’s daughter: trust me, after that,  
You scarce can fail to match his masterpiece.”  
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.  
Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite



Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.  
News from the humming city comes to it  
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells ;  
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear  
The windy clanging of the minster clock ;  
Although between it and the garden lies  
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,  
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar.  
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge  
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between

Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,  
And all about the large lime feathers low,  
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in herself,  
Grew, seldom seen ; not less among us lived  
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard  
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter ? Where was he,  
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
At such a distance from his youth in grief,  
That, having seen, forgot ? The common mouth,  
So gross to express delight, in praise of her  
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.

And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,  
Would play with flying forms and images,  
Yet this is also true, that, long before  
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name  
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,  
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,  
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,  
Born out of everything I heard and saw,  
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul ;  
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm  
To one that travels quickly, made the air  
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,

That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream  
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,  
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds  
For ever in itself the day we went  
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,  
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,  
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud  
Drew downward : but all else of heaven was pure  
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,  
And May with me from head to heel. And now,  
As though 'twere yesterday, as though it were  
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound  
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these),  
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,  
And, where the hedgerow cuts the pathway, stood  
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,  
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods  
Came voices of the well-contented doves.  
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,  
But shook his song together as he near'd  
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,  
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills ;  
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm ;  
The redcap whistled ; and the nightingale  
Sang loud, as though he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,  
"Hear how the bushes echo ! by my life,  
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing  
Like poets, from the vanity of song ?  
Or have they any sense of why they sing ?  
And would they praise the heavens for what they have ?"  
And I made answer, "Were there nothing else  
For which to praise the heavens but only love,  
That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,  
And on we went ; but ere an hour had pass'd



We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North ;  
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us  
To one green wicket in a privet hedge ;  
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk  
Through crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned :  
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew  
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.  
The garden stretches southward. In the midst  
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.  
The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily  
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

“ Eustace,” I said, “ this wonder keeps the house.”  
He nodded, but a moment afterwards  
He cried, “ Look ! look ! ” Before he ceased I turn'd,  
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,  
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,  
And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—  
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—  
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.  
A single stream of all her soft brown hair  
Pour'd on one side : the shadow of the flowers  
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering  
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—  
Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,  
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced  
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,  
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground !  
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd  
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,  
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,  
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast  
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,  
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

So rapt, we near'd the house ; but she, a Rose  
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,  
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd



Into the world without ; till close at hand,  
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,  
This murmur broke the stillness of that air  
Which brooded round about her :

“ Ah, one rose,  
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,  
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips  
Less exquisite than thine.”

She look'd : but all  
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd  
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,  
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound  
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips  
For some sweet answer, though no answer came,  
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,  
In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,  
Saw her no more, although I linger'd there  
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star  
Beam'd through the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.

So home we went, and all the livelong way  
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.  
“ Now,” said he, “ will you climb the top of Art.  
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim  
The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master, Love,  
A more ideal Artist he than all.”

So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,  
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,  
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,  
And shaping faithful record of the glance  
That graced the giving—such a noise of life  
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice  
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such  
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.

And all that night I heard the watchman peal  
The sliding season : all that night I heard  
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours,  
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
Distilling odours on me as they went  
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,  
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm  
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.  
Light pretexts drew me : sometimes a Dutch love  
For tulips ; then for roses, moss or musk,  
To grace my city rooms ; or fruits and cream  
Served in the weeping elm ; and more and more  
A word could bring the colour to my cheek ;  
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew ;  
Love trebled life within me, and with each  
The year increased.

The daughters of the year,  
One after one, through that still garden pass'd :  
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
Danced into light, and died into the shade ;  
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace  
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,  
Like one that never can be wholly known,  
Her beauty grew ; till Autumn brought an hour  
For Eustace, when I heard his deep " I will,"  
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold  
From thence, through all the worlds : but I rose up  
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes  
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd  
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.

There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
Two mutually enfolded ; Love, the third,  
Between us, in the circle of his arms  
Enwound us both ; and over many a range  
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,



Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
Reveal'd their shining windows : from them clash'd  
The bells ; we listen'd ; with the time we play'd ;  
We spoke of other things ; we coursed about  
The subject most at heart, more near and near,  
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round  
The central wish, until we settled there.

Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,  
Requiring, though I knew it was mine own,  
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved ;  
And in that time and place she answer'd me,  
And in the compass of three little words,  
More musical than ever came in one,  
The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
Made me most happy, faltering, " I am thine."

Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say  
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full  
How passion rose through circumstantial grades  
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed  
I had not stayed so long to tell you all,  
But while I mus'd came Memory with sad eyes,  
Holding the folded annals of my youth ;  
And while I mus'd, Love with knit brows went by.  
And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
And spake, " Be wise : not easily forgiven  
Are those, who setting wide the doors, that bar  
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,  
Let in the day." Here, then, my words have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—  
Of that which came between, more sweet than each.  
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves  
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs  
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,



Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell  
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges given,  
 And vows, where there was never need of vows,  
 And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap  
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above  
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale  
 Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;  
 Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,  
 Spread the light haze along the river-shores,  
 And in the hollows; or as once we met  
 Unheedful, though beneath a whispering rain  
 Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,  
 And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.

But this whole hour your eyes have been intent  
 On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds  
 May not be dwelt on by the common day.  
 This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul;  
 Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time  
 Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,  
 As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
 My first, last love; the idol of my youth,  
 The darling of my manhood, and, alas!  
 Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

## DORA.

WITH Farmer Allan at the farm abode  
 William and Dora. William was his son,  
 And she his niece. He often look'd at them,  
 And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."  
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
 And yearn'd towards William; but the youth, because  
 He had been always with her in the house,  
 Thought not of Dora.

Then there came a day

When Allan call'd his son, and said, "My son,  
I married late, but I would wish to see  
My grandchild on my knees before I die :  
And I have set my heart upon a match.  
Now therefore look to Dora ; she is well  
To look to ; thrifty too beyond her age.  
She is my brother's daughter : he and I  
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died  
In foreign lands ; but for his sake I bred  
His daughter Dora : take her for your wife ;  
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,  
For many years." But William answer'd short :  
"I cannot marry Dora ; by my life,  
I will not marry Dora." Then the old man  
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said :  
"You will not, boy ! you dare to answer thus ?  
But in my time a father's word was law,  
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it ;  
Consider, William : take a month to think,  
And let me have an answer to my wish ;  
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
And never more darken my doors again."  
But William answer'd madly ; bit his lips,  
And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
The less he liked her ; and his ways were harsh :  
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
The month was out he left his father's house,  
And hired himself to work within the fields ;  
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
A labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison.

Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd  
His niece and said : "My girl, I love you well ;  
But if you speak with him that was my son,  
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
My home is none of yours. My will is law."  
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
"It cannot be : my uncle's mind will change !"



And days went on, and there was born a boy  
To William : then distresses came on him ;  
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
But Dora stored what little she could save,  
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
Who sent it : till at last a fever seized  
On William, and in harvest time he died.

Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said :  
" I have obey'd my uncle until now,  
And I have sinn'd, for it was all through me  
This evil came on William at the first.  
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,  
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
And for this orphan, I am come to you :  
You know there has not been for these five years  
So full a harvest : let me take the boy,  
And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
Among the wheat ; that when his heart is glad  
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."

And Dora took the child, and went her way  
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
Far off the farmer came into the field  
And spied her not ; for none of all his men  
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;  
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,  
But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd.  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
The child once more, and sat upon the mound :  
And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.



Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
And came and said, "Where were you yesterday?  
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"  
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"  
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not  
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again,  
"Do with me as you will, but take the child  
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"  
And Allan said, "I see it is a trick  
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
I must be taught my duty, and by you!  
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;  
But go you hence, and never see me more."

So saying, he took the boy, that cried aloud  
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell  
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,  
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,  
Remembering the day when first she came,  
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,  
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise  
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.  
And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;  
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:  
He says that he will never see me more."  
Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,  
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself.  
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
His mother: therefore thou and I will go,

And I will have my boy, and bring him home ;  
And I will beg of him to take thee back.  
But if he will not take thee back again,  
Then thou and I will live within one house,  
And work for William's child, until he grows  
Of age to help us."

So the women kiss'd  
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.  
The door was off the latch : they peep'd, and saw  
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,  
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him ; and the lad stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung  
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.  
Then they came in : but when the boy beheld  
His mother, he cried out to her.

And Allan set him down, and Mary said :

" O Father !—if you let me call you so—  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child ; but now I come  
For Dora : take her back ; she loves you well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace  
With all men ; for I ask'd him, and he said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying me—  
I had been a patient wife : but, Sir, he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father thus.  
' God bless him ! ' he said ; ' and may he never know  
The troubles I have gone through ! ' Then he turn'd  
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am !  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight  
His father's memory ; and take Dora back,  
And let all this be as it was before."

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary. There was silence in the room ;  
And all at once the old man burst in sobs :—



"I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.  
I have kill'd him—but I lov'd him—my dear son.  
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.  
Kiss me, my children."

Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times  
And all the man was broken with remorse ;  
And all his love came back a hundredfold ;  
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,  
Thinking of William.

So those four abode  
Within one house together ; and as years  
Went forward, Mary took another mate,  
But Dora lived unmarried till her death

## AUDLEY COURT

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic there  
At Audley Court."

I spoke, while Audley feast'  
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. "With all my heart,"  
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd through the swarm,  
And rounded by the stillness of the beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd  
The flat red granite ; so by many a sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd  
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd through all  
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,  
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,  
With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
And chimneys muffled, in the leafy vine.



There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
 A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
 Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,  
 And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
 Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,  
 Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
 Imbedded and injellied ; last, with these,  
 A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
 Prime, which I knew : and so we sat and eat,  
 And talk'd old matters over—who was dead,  
 Who married, who was like to be, and how  
 The races went, and who would rent the hall ;  
 Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was  
 This season ; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,  
 The four-field system, and the price of grain ;  
 And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,  
 And came again together on the king  
 With heated faces ; till he laugh'd aloud,  
 And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung  
 To hear him, clapt his hands in mine and sang

“ Oh ! who would fight and march and counter-march,  
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
 And shovell'd up into a bloody trench  
 Where no one knows ? but let me live my life.

“ Oh ! who would cast and balance at a desk,  
 Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,  
 Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
 Are full of chalk ? but let me live my life.

“ Who'd serve the state ? for if I carved my name  
 Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,  
 I might as well have traced it in the sands ;  
 The sea wastes all : but let me live my life.

“ Oh ! who would love ? I woo'd a woman once,  
 But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
 And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
 Turns from the sea : but let me live my life.”

He sang his song, and I replied with mine.

I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,  
His books—the more the pity, so I said—  
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—  
I set the words, and added names I knew.

“Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me :  
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

“Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm ;  
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

“Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast :  
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip :  
I go to-night ; I come to-morrow morn.

“I go, but I return : I would I were  
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.  
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.”

So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,  
The farmer's son who lived across the bay,  
My friend ; and I, that having wherewithal,  
And in the fallow leisure of my life,  
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,  
Did what I would ; but ere the night we rose  
And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just  
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf  
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills ; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay.  
The town was hush'd beneath us ; lower down  
The bay was oily-calm ; the harbour-buoy  
With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.



## WALKING TO THE MAIL.

*John.* I'm glad I walked. How fresh the meadows look  
Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.  
Is yon plantation where this by-way joins  
The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?  
No, not the County Member's with the vane:  
Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half  
A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's:  
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood  
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face  
From all men, and commercing with himself,  
He lost the sense that handles daily life—  
That keeps us all in order more or less—  
And sick of home went overseas for change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here and there.  
But let him go; his devil goes with him,  
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—  
There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up  
And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;  
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—  
Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—



*Deïcto*: but his house, for so they say,  
 Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook  
 The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,  
 And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:  
 The farmer vex'd packs up his beds and chairs,  
 And all his household stuff; and with his boy  
 Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,  
 Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, "What!  
 You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost  
 (For they had pack'd the thing among the beds).  
 "Oh, well," says he, "you flitting with us too—  
 Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

*John.* He left his wife behind; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once:  
 A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—  
 'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—  
 You could not light upon a sweeter thing:  
 A body slight and round, and like a pear  
 In growing; modest eyes, a hand, a foot  
 Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin  
 As clean and white as privet with its flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved  
 At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.  
 She was the daughter of a cottager,  
 Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,  
 New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd  
 To what she is: a nature never kind!  
 Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say.  
 Kind nature is the best: those manners next  
 That fit us like a nature second-hand;  
 Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that pass'd,  
 And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.  
 I once was near him, when his bailiff brought  
 A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince

As from a venomous thing ; he thought himself  
 A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry  
 Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes  
 Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs  
 Sweat on his blazon'd chairs ; but, sir, you know  
 That these two parties still divide the world—  
 Of those that want, and those that have : and still  
 The same old sore breaks out from age to age  
 With much the same result. Now I myself,  
 A Tory to the quick, was as a boy  
 Destructive, when I had not what I would.  
 I was at school—a college in the South :  
 There lived a flayflint near ; we stole his fruit,  
 His hens, his eggs : but there was law for *us* ;  
 We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,  
 With meditative grunts of much content,  
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.  
 By night we dragg'd her to the college tower  
 From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair  
 With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,  
 And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.  
 Large range of prospect had the mother sow,  
 And but for daily loss of one she loved,  
 As one by one we took them—but for this—  
 As never sow was higher in this world—  
 Might have been happy : but what lot is pure  
 We took them all, till she was left alone  
 Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
 And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.

*John.* They found you out?

*James.*

Not they.

*John.*

Well—after all—

What know we of the secret of a man?

His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are sound,  
 That we should mimic this raw fool the world,  
 Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,  
 As ruthless as a baby with a worm,



As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.

But put your best foot forward, or I fear  
That we shall miss the mail : and here it comes  
With five at top : as quaint a four-in-hand  
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

## EDWIN MORRIS; OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,  
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :  
See here, my doing—curves of mountain, bridge  
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a rock,  
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock ;  
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,  
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,  
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimnied bulk  
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake  
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull  
The curate ; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,  
Long learned names of agaric, moss, and fern,  
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,  
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,  
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd  
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger-nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,  
And his first passion ; and he answer'd me  
And well his words became him : was he not



A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke :—

“ My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,  
And three rich sennights more, my love for **her**.  
My love for Nature and my love for her,  
Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,  
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.  
To some full music rose and sank the sun,  
And some full music seem'd to move and change  
With all the varied changes of the dark,  
And either twilight and the day between ;  
For daily hope fulfill'd to rise again  
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.”

Or this or something like **to** this he spoke.  
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull,  
“ I take it, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world,  
A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,  
And keeps us tight ; but these unreal ways  
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed  
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.  
I say, God made the woman for the man,  
And for the good and increase of the world.”

“ Parson,” said I, “ you pitch the pipe too low :  
But I have sudden touches, and can run  
My faith beyond my practice into his :  
Though if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce hear other music : yet say on.  
What should one give to light on such a dream ? ”  
I ask'd him half-sardonically.

“ Give ?

Give all thou art," he answer'd, and a light  
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek.  
"I would have hid her needle in my heart,  
To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin : my ears could hear  
Her lightest breaths : her least remark was worth  
The experience of the wise. I went and came :  
Her voice fled always through the summer land ;  
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days !  
The flower of each, those moments when we met,  
The crown of all, we met to part no more."

Were not his words delicious, I a beast  
To take them as I did? but something jarr'd ;  
Whether he spoke too largely ; that there seem'd  
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,  
Or over-smoothness : howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humour, and I said :

"Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone  
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,  
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?  
But you can talk : yours is a kindly vein :  
I have, I think—Heaven knows—as much within :  
Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,  
That like a purple beech among the greens  
Looks out of place : 'tis from no want in her :  
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
O. something of a wayward modern mind  
Dissecting passion. Tim will set me right."

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.  
"Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull :  
God made the woman for the use of man,  
And for the good and increase of the world."  
And I and Edwin laugh'd ; and now we paused



About the windings of the marge to hear  
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms  
And alders, garden-isles ; and now we left  
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
By ripply shallows of the lispings lake,  
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,  
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him  
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.  
'Tis true, we met ; one hour I had, no more :  
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*.  
The close, " Your Letty, only yours ; " and this  
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn  
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart  
The sweet-gale rustle round the shelving keel ;  
And out I stept, and up I crept : she moved,  
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers :  
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice ; and she,  
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed  
In some new planet : a silent cousin stole  
Upon us and departed : " Leave," she cried,  
" O leave me ! "—" Never, dearest, never : here  
I brave the worst : " and while we stood like fools  
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
And poodles yell'd within, and out they came—  
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. " What, with him :  
Go " (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus) ; " him ! "  
I choked. Again they shrieked the burthen, " Him ! "  
Again with hands of wild rejection, " Go !—  
Girl, get you in ! " She went—and in one month  
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,  
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,  
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile  
And educated whisker. But for me,



They set an ancient creditor to work :  
 It seems I broke a close with force and arms :  
 There came a mystic token from the king  
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy !  
 I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd :  
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below :  
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm ;  
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen  
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear?—perhaps : yet long ago  
 I have pardon'd little Letty ; not indeed,  
 It may be, for her own dear sake, but this—  
 She seems a part of those fresh days to me ;  
 For in the dust and drouth of London life  
 She moves among my visions of the lake,  
 While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then  
 While the gold-lily blows, and overhead  
 The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHOUGH I be the basest of mankind,  
 From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,  
 Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet  
 For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,  
 I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold  
 Of saintdom, and to clamour, mourn, and sob,  
 Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,  
 Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin !

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,  
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years.  
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,  
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,  
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps.  
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud  
 Patient on this tall pillar I have borne

Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow  
And I had hoped that ere this period closed  
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,  
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs  
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord : I do not breathe,  
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.  
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still  
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,  
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd  
My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,  
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,  
For I was strong and hale of body then ;  
And though my teeth, which now are dropt away,  
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard  
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,  
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound  
Of pious hymns and psalms, and sometimes saw  
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.  
Now am I feeble grown ; my end draws nigh—  
I hope my end draws nigh : half deaf I am,  
So that I scarce can hear the people hum  
About the column's base, and almost blind,  
And scarce can recognise the fields I know ;  
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew ;  
Yet cease I not to clamour and to cry,  
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,  
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,  
Have mercy, mercy ! take away my sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,  
Who may be saved ? who is it may be saved ?  
Who may be made a saint, if I fail here ?  
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.  
For did not all thy martyrs die one death ?  
For either they were stoned, or crucified,  
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn



In twain beneath the ribs ; but I die here  
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.  
Bear witness, if I could have found a way  
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)  
More slowly-painful to subdue this home  
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,  
I had not stinted practice, O my God.

For not alone this pillar-punishment,  
Not this alone I bore : but while I lived  
In the white convent down the valley there,  
For many weeks about my loins I wore  
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,  
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose ;  
And spake not of it to a single soul,  
Until the ulcer, eating through my skin,  
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all  
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this  
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.

Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,  
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.  
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay  
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones ;  
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice  
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes  
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,  
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came  
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live :  
And they say then that I work'd miracles.  
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,  
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,  
Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
Have mercy, mercy ! cover all my sin.

Then, that I might be more alone with thee,  
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high  
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve ;  
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose  
Twenty by measure ; last of all, I grew



Twice ten long weary weary years to this.  
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.

I think that I have borne as much as this—  
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,  
If I may measure time by yon slow light,  
And this high dial which my sorrow crowns—  
So much—even so.

And yet I know not well,  
For that the evil ones come here, and say,  
“ Fall down, O Simeon : thou hast suffer'd long  
For ages and for ages ! ” then they prate  
Of penances I cannot have gone through,  
Perplexing me with lies ; and oft I fall,  
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies,  
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints  
Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth  
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,  
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,  
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,  
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,  
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints ;  
Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
I wake : the chill stars sparkle ; I am wet  
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.  
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back ;  
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck ;  
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,  
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die :  
O mercy, mercy ! wash away my sin.

O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am ;  
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin :  
'Tis their own doing ; this is none of mine ;  
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,  
That here come those that worship me ? Ha ! ha !

They think that I am somewhat. What am I?  
 The silly people take me for a saint,  
 And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers :  
 And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)  
 Have all in all endured as much and more  
 Than many just and holy men, whose names  
 Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.

Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.  
 What is it I can have done to merit this?  
 I am a sinner viler than you all.  
 It may be I have wrought some miracles,  
 And cured some halt and maim'd ; but what of that?  
 It may be, no one, even among the saints,  
 May match his pains with mine ; but what of that?  
 Yet do not rise : for you may look on me,  
 And in your looking you may kneel to God.  
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or maim'd?  
 I think you know I have some power with Heaven  
 From my long penance : let him speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.  
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark ! they shout  
 " St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,  
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul.  
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
 Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
 This is not told of any. They were saints.  
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved ;  
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, " Behold a saint !"  
 And lower voices saint me from above.  
 Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis  
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death  
 Spreads inore and more and more, that God hath now  
 Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all  
 My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,  
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
 Stylites, among men ; I, Simeon.



The watcher on the column till the end ;  
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;  
I, whose bald brows in silent hours become  
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
From my high nest of penance here proclaim  
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,  
A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath  
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve ;  
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
I smote them with the cross ; they swarm'd again.  
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest :  
They flapp'd my light out as I read : I saw  
Their faces grow between me and my book :  
With colt-like whinny and with hoggish whine  
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,  
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify  
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns ;  
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast  
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,  
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,  
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still  
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise :  
God only through his bounty hath thought fit,  
Among the powers and princes of this world,  
To make me an example to mankind,  
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say  
But that a time may come—yea, even now,  
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs  
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors  
When you may worship me without reproach ;  
For I will leave my relics in your land,  
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,  
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,  
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.

While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain  
Ran shrivelling through me, and a cloudlike change,



In passing, with a grosser film made thick  
 These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !  
 Surely the end ! What's here ? a shape, a shade,  
 A flash of light. Is that the angel there  
 That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother, come !  
 I know thy glittering face. I waited long ;  
 My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?  
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ !  
 'Tis gone ! 'tis here again ; the crown ! the crown !  
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dewes of Paradise,  
 Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.  
 Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints : I trust  
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven  
 Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God.  
 Among you there, and let him presently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
 A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,

Aid all this foolish people ; let them take  
 Example, pattern : lead them to thy light.

## THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;  
 Once more before my face  
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
 Beneath its drift of smoke ;  
 And ah ! with what delighted eyes  
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
Could hope itself return'd ;

To yonder oak within the field  
I spoke without restraint,  
And with a larger faith appealed  
Than Papist unto saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
And told him of my choice,  
Until he plagiarized a heart,  
And answer'd with a voice.

Though what he whispered, under **Heaven**  
None else could understand ;  
I found him garrulously given,  
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
Is many a weary hour ;  
'Twere well to question him, and try  
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
Whose topmost branches can discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
If ever maid or spouse,  
As fair as my Olivia, came  
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

“O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
Whatever maiden grace  
The good old summers, year by year,  
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

“ Old summers, when the monk was fat,  
And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
The girls upon the cheek,

“ Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
And number'd bead, and shrift,  
Bluff Harry broke into the spence,  
And turn'd the cowls adrift :

“ And I have seen some score of those  
Fresh faces, that would thrive  
When his man-minded offset rose  
To chase the deer at five ;

“ And all that from the town would stroll,  
Till that wild wind made work  
In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
Went by me, like a stork :

“ The slight she-slips of loyal blood  
And others, passing praise,  
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
For puritanic stays :

“ And I have shadow'd many a group  
Of beauties, that were born  
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
Or while the patch was worn ;

“ And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
About me leap'd and laugh'd  
The modish Cupid of the day,  
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

“ I swear (and else may insects prick  
Each leaf into a gall)  
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
Is three times worth them all ;



“ For those and theirs, by Nature’s law,  
Have faded long ago ;  
But in these latter springs I saw  
Your own Olivia blow,

“ From when she gamboll’d on the greens,  
A baby-germ, to when  
The maiden blossoms of her teens  
Could number five from ten.

“ I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain  
(And hear me with thine ears),  
That, though I circle in the grain  
Five hundred rings of years—

“ Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
Did never creature pass  
So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

“ For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.”

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace ;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft has heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

“ O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town ;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

“ And with him Albert came on his.

I look'd at him with joy :  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

“ An hour had pass'd--and, sitting straight  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

“ But, as for her, she stay'd at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

“ She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf ;  
She left the new piano shut :  
She could not please herself.

“ Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice through all the holt.  
Before her, and the park.

“ A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child :

“ But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir ;  
The flower she touch'd on dipt and rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

“ And here she came, and round me play'd  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you made  
About my ‘ giant bole ; ’

“ And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist :  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

“ I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

“ Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.”

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace !  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

“ O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

“ A tear-drop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

“ Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,  
She glanced across the plain ;  
But not a creature was in sight :  
She kiss'd me once again.



“ Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind.  
But yet my sap was stirr'd ;

“ And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

“ Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm—  
The cushions of whose touch may press  
The maiden's tender palm.

“ I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust :

“ For ah ! my friend, the days were brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

“ But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

“ She had not found me so remiss :  
But lightly issuing through,  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss  
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well ;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn,  
And what remains to tell.

“ 'Tis little more : the day was warm ;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm,  
And at my feet she lay.

“ Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Through all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

“ I took the swarming sound of life—  
The music from the town—  
The murmurs of the drum and fife,  
And lull'd them in my own.

“ Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye ;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly ;

“ A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine ;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine.

“ Then close and dark my arms I spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest—  
Dropt dew upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

“ But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

“And yet it was a graceful gift—  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

“I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass—  
O kiss him once for me!

“O kiss him twice and thrice for me,  
That have no lips to kiss;  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this.”

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
Look farther through the chace,  
Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest  
That but a moment lay  
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice.  
The warmth it thence shall win  
To riper life may magnetize  
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
Or lapse from hand to hand,  
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
That art the fairest-spoken tree  
From here to Lizard-point.



O rock upon thy towery top  
All throats that gurgle sweet !  
All starry culmination drop  
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow—  
And while he sinks or swell,  
The full south-breeze around thee blow  
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
That under deeply strikes !  
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
But, rolling as in sleep,  
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
That only by thy side  
Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall  
She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
And praise thee more in both  
Than bard has honou'd beech or lime,  
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
And mystic sentence spoke ;  
And more than England honours that,  
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
Till all the paths were dim,  
And far below the Roundhead rode,  
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

OF love that never found his earthly close,  
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?  
Or all the same as if he had not been?

Not so. Shall Error in the round of time  
Still father Truth? Oh shall the braggart shout  
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself  
Through madness, hated by the wise, to law  
System and empire? Sin itself be found  
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?  
And only he, this wonder, dead, become  
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone  
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?

If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,  
Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,  
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,  
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
But am I not the nobler through thy love?  
Oh three times less unworthy! likewise thou  
Art more through Love, and greater than thy years.  
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.

Will some one say, then why not ill for good?  
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man  
My work shall answer, since I knew the right



And did it ; for a man is not as God,  
 But then most Godlike being most a man.  
 —So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—  
 Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow  
 To feel it ! For how hard it seem'd to me,  
 When eyes, love-languid through half-tears, would dwell  
 One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,  
 Then not to dare to see ! when thy low voice,  
 Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep  
 My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,  
 And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,  
 And on thy bosom (deep-desir'd relief !)  
 Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd  
 Upon my brain, my senses, and my soul !

For Love himself took part against himself  
 To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—  
 Oh this world's curse,—beloved but hated—came  
 Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,  
 And crying, “ Who is this ? behold thy bride,”  
 She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard

To alien ears, I did not speak to these—  
 No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :  
 Hard is my doom and thine : thou knowest it all.

Could Love part thus ? was it not well to speak,  
 To have spoken once ? It could not but be well.  
 The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,  
 The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,  
 And all good things from evil, brought the night  
 In which we sat together and alone,  
 And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,  
 Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,  
 That burn'd upon its object through such tears  
 As flow but once a life.

The trance gave way

To those caresses, when a hundred times



In that last kiss, which never was the last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.  
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words  
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth ;  
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead  
The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd  
In that brief night ; the summer night, that paused  
Among her stars to hear us ; stars that hung  
Love-charm'd to listen : all the wheels of Time  
Spun round in station, but the end had come.

Oh then like those, who clench their nerves to rush  
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There—closing like an individual life—  
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,  
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,  
And bade adieu for ever !

Live—yet live—  
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all  
Life needs for life is possible to will—  
Live happy ; tend thy flowers ; be tended by  
My blessing ! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts  
Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou  
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,  
If not to be forgotten—not at once—  
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,  
Oh might it come like one that looks content,  
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,  
And point thee forward to a distant light,  
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart  
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refresh'd,  
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown  
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl  
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,  
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote :  
 It was last summer on a tour in Wales :  
 Old James was with me : we that day had been  
 Up Snowdon ; and I wish'd for Leonard there,  
 And found him in Llanberis : then we crost  
 Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up  
 The counter side ; and that same song of his  
 He told me ; for I banter'd him, and swore  
 They said he lived shut up within himself,  
 A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,  
 That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,  
 Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech, " Give,  
 Cram us with all," but count not me the herd !

To which, " They call me what they will," he said :  
 " But I was born too late : the fair new forms,  
 That float about the threshold of an age,  
 Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—  
 Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—  
 Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
 But if you care indeed to listen, hear  
 These measured words, my work of yestermorn.

" We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move ;  
 The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun ;  
 The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse ;  
 And human things returning on themselves  
 Move onward, leading up the golden year.

" Ah, though the times, when some new thought can bud,  
 Are but as pcets' seasons when they flower,  
 Yet seas, that daily gain upon the shore,  
 Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,  
 And slow and sure comes up the golden year.

" When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,  
 But smit with freër light shall slowly melt  
 In many streams to fatten lower lands,



And light shall spread, and man be liker man  
Through all the season of the golden year.

“ Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?  
If all the world were falcons, what of that?  
The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

“ Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the Press;  
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;  
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

“ But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good  
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,  
Through all the circle of the golden year?”

Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon  
“ Ah, folly!” in mimic cadence answer'd James—  
“ Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,  
'Tis like the second world to us that live:  
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven  
As on this vision of the golden year.”

With that he struck his staff against the rocks  
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full  
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,  
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,  
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:  
Then added all in heat:

“ What stuff is this!  
Old writers push'd the happy season back,—  
The more fools they,—we forward: dreamers both:  
You most, that in an age, when every hour  
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,  
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt  
Upon the teeming harvest, should not dip



His hand into the bag : but well I know  
That unto him who works, and feels he works,  
This same grand year is ever at the doors."

He spoke ; and, high above, I heard them blast  
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap  
And buffet round the hills from bluff to bluff.

## ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,  
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole  
Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me  
I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd  
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those  
That loved me and alone ; on shore, and when  
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
For always roaming with a hungry heart  
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all ;  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,  
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.  
I am a part of all that I have met ;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough  
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use !  
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains : but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things ; and vile it were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself;  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labour, by slow prudence to make mind  
 A rugged people, and through soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port : the vessel puffs her sail :  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought of me—  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed  
 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old ;  
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil ;  
 Death closes all : but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :  
 The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the deep  
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite  
 The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
 Of all the western stars until I die.  
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :  
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.



Though much is taken, much abides ; and though  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we are ;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

### LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn :  
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-  
horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,  
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time ;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed ;  
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;  
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;



In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;  
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of  
love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so  
young,  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, " My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, " I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me  
wrong ;"

Saying, " Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, " I have  
loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing  
hands :

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords  
with might ;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out  
of sight.

Many a morning on the noorland did we hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the  
spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—having known me—to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be: thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise with clay

As the husband is, the wife is: thou art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee  
down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel  
force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed  
with wine.

Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought:  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter  
thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—  
Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew thee with  
my hand!—

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!



Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy  
proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was  
loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the root.

Never, though my mortal summers to such length of years should  
come

As the many winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?  
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:  
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?  
No—she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and  
fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom  
years,

And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.



Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will cry.  
'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

Oh, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the two.

Oh, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

" They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not  
exempt—

Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—Perish in thy self-contempt !

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy ! wherefore should I care ?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like  
these ?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds are laid with  
sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honour feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness ? I will turn that earlier page.  
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would  
yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men :

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new :  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they  
shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly  
dew

From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing  
warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-  
storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were  
furl'd

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd, ere my passion sweeping through me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye ;



Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint,  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to  
point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,  
Though the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden  
breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?  
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved so slight a  
thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness ! woman's pleasure,  
woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with  
mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some  
retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat ;



Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd ;  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,  
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from  
the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited  
tree—

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march  
of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake  
mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and  
breathing-space ;

I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books,—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime ?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
 Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in  
 Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.  
 Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of  
 change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day :  
 Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :  
 Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the  
 Sun—

Oh, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
 Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall !  
 Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,  
 Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow ;  
 For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA.

*I WAITED for the train at Coventry ;  
 I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,  
 To watch the three tall spires : and there I shaped  
 The city's ancient legend into this :—*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
 New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
 Cry down the past, not only we, that prate  
 Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,



And loathed to see them overtax'd ; but she  
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,  
The woman of a thousand summers back,  
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled  
In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought  
Their children, clamouring, " If we pay, we starve !  
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode  
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his hair  
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,  
And pray'd him, " If they pay this tax, they starve."  
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,  
" You would not let your little finger ache  
For such as *these* ? "—" But I would die," said she  
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul :  
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear—  
" Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk ! "—" Alas ! " she said,  
" But prove me what it is I would not do."  
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,  
He answer'd, " Ride you naked through the town,  
And I repeal it ; " and nodding, as in scorn,  
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her mind,  
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,  
Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,  
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all  
The hard condition ; but that she would loose  
The people : therefore, as they loved her well,  
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing ; but that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,  
The grim Earl's gift ; but ever at a breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon



Half-dipt in cloud : anon she shook her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee ;  
Unclad herself in haste ; adown the stair  
Stole on ; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd  
The gateway ; there she found her palfrey trapt  
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity.  
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.  
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout  
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking cur  
Made her cheek flame : her palfrey's footfall shot  
Light horrors through her pulses : the blind walls  
Were full of chinks and holes ; and overhead  
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared ; but she  
Not less through all bore up, till, last, she saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field  
Gleam through the Gothic archways in the wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity.  
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,  
The fatal byword of all years to come,  
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
Peep'd ; but his eyes, before they had their will,  
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait  
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused ;  
And she, that knew not, pass'd ; and all at once,  
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon  
Was clash'd and hammered from a hundred towers,  
One after one : but even then she gain'd  
Her bower ; whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,  
To meet her lord, she took the tax away,  
And built herself an everlasting name.

## THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
" 'Thou art so full of misery,  
Were it not better not to be? "

Then to the still small voice I said,  
" Let me not cast in endless shade  
What is so wonderfully made. "

To which the voice did urge reply :  
" To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
Come from the wells where he did lie.

" An inner impulse rent the veil  
Of his old husk : from head to tail  
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

" He dried his wings : like gauze they grew ;  
Through crofts and pastures wet with dew  
A living flash of light he flew. "

I said, " When first the world began,  
Young Nature through five cycles ran,  
And in the sixth she moulded man.

" She gave him mind, the lordliest  
Proportion, and, above the rest,  
Dominion in the head and breast. "

Thereto the silent voice replied :  
" Self-blinded are you by your pride.  
Look up through night : the world is wide.

" This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
That in a boundless universe  
Is boundless better, boundless worse.



“Think you this mould of hopes and fears  
Could find no statelier than his peers  
In yonder hundred million spheres?”

It spake, moreover, in my mind :  
“Though thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
Yet is there plenty of the kind.”

Then did my response clearer fall :  
“No compound of this earthly ball  
Is like another, all in all.”

To which he answer'd scoffingly :  
“Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,  
Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?

“Or will one beam be less intense,  
When thy peculiar difference  
Is cancell'd in the world of sense ?”

I would have said, “Thou canst not know  
But my full heart, that work'd below,  
Rain'd through my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :  
“Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
Surely 'twere better not to be.

“Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
Nor any train of reason keep :  
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep.”

I said, “The years with change advance :  
If I make dark my countenance,  
I shut my life from happier chance.

“Some turn this sickness yet might take,  
Ev'n yet.” But he : “What drug can make  
A wither'd palsy cease to shake ?”



I wept, " Though I should die, I know  
That all about the thorn will blow  
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

" And men, through novel spheres of thought  
Still moving after truth long sought,  
Will learn new things when I am not."

" Yet," said the secret voice, " some time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

" Not less swift souls that yearn for light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and night

" Not less the bee would range her cells  
The furzy prickly fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that " all the years invent ;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

" Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Though watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?"

" The highest-mounted mind," he said,  
" Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

" Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main ?

" Or make that morn, from his cold crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

“ Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

“ Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

“ 'Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

“ Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.”

I said, “ When I am gone away,  
' He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonour to my clay.”

“ This is more vile,” he made reply.  
“ To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

“ Sick art thou—a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

“ Do men love thee? Art thou so bound  
To men that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?

“ The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd autumn-sheaf.

“ Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just.”

“ Hard task, to pluck resolve,” I cried,  
“ From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride !

“ Nay—rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm’d me in the days  
While still I yearn’d for human praise.

“ When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flashed and rung.

“ I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish’d without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

“ Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life—

“ Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

“ As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb about—

“ To search through all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

“ At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

“ To pass, when Life her light withdrawn,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause—



“ In some good cause, not in mine own,  
To perish, wept for, honour'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown ;

“ Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears.  
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

“ Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke.  
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.”

“ Yea ! ” said the voice, “ thy dream was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

“ If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour?

“ Then comes the check, the change, the fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

“ Yet hadst thou, through enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

“ Thou hadst not between death and birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labour little worth.

“ That men with knowledge merely play'd,  
I told thee—hardly nigher made,  
Though scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“ Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not : either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope  
Beyond the farthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?  
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,  
"Wilt thou make everything a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

“ I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

“ Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

“ But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head—

“ Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

“ He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Though curs'd and scorn'd, and bruis'd with stones :

“ But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face.”

The sullen answer slid betwixt :

“ Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd.”

I said, “ I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

“ And that, in seeking to undo  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

“ Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :



“For I go, weak from suffering here ;  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ?”

“Consider well,” the voice replied,  
“His face, that two hours since hath died :  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

“Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

“His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing express’d  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

“His lips are very mild and meek :  
Though one should smite him on the cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

“His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss’d, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonour to her race ;

“His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honour, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

“He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

“High up the vapours fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him.”

“If all be dark, vague voice,” I said,  
“These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

“The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

“I found him when my years were few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

“From grave to grave the shadow crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

“The simple senses crown'd his head :  
'Omega ! thou art Lord,' they said,  
'We find no motion in the dead.'

“Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

“Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense?

“He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

“Here sits he shaping wings to fly :  
His heart forebodes a mystery :  
He names the name Eternity.

“That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

“He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And through thick veils to apprehend  
A labour working to an end.

“ The end and the beginning vex  
His reason ; many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counterchecks

“ He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

“ Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

“ Ah ! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt.

“ But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

“ The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve.”

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced :

“ Where wert thou when thy father play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

“ A merry boy they called him then.  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again,

“ Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man :



“ Who took a wife, who rear’d his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather’d on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days :

“ A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth ! ”

“ These words,” I said, “ are like the rest ;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast :

“ But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end ;

“ Yet how should I for certain hold,  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould ?

“ I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, howe’er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

“ It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

“ As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping through from state to state.

“ As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

“ So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and touch.

"But, if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

"Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of night.

"Or if through lower lives I came—  
Though all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame—

"I might forget my weaker lot ;  
For is not our first year forgot ?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory :

"For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime ?

"Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

"Of something felt, like something here ;  
Of something done, I know not where ;  
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk," said he,  
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast miss'd thy mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant:  
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
"Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measur'd footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.



And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :  
I spoke, but answer came there none :  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, " Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighbourhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
" I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
" I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes,

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :  
" What is it thou knowest, sweet voice ?" I cried.  
" A hidden hope," the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, although no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
 And Nature's living motion lent  
 The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
 The slow result of winter showers :  
 You scarce could see the grass for flowers

I wonder'd, while I pac'd along :  
 The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
 There seem'd no room for sense of wrong,

So variously seem'd all things wrought,  
 I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
 To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
 To commune with that barren voice  
 Than him that said, " Rejoice ! rejoice !

## THE DAY-DREAM.

### PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
 A pleasant hour has pass'd away  
 While, dreaming on your damask cheek,  
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
 As by the lattice you reclined,  
 I went through many wayward moods  
 To see you dreaming—and, behind,  
 A summer crisp with shining woods.  
 And I too dream'd, until at last  
 Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
 The reflex of a legend past,  
 And loosely settled into form.

And would you have the thought I had,  
 And see the vision that I saw,  
 Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
 A crimson to the quaint Macaw,  
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye—  
 The rhymes are dazzled from their place,  
 And order'd words asunder fly.

## THE SLEEPING PALACE.

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
 Clothes and reclothes the happy plains;  
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
 Here stays the blood along the veins.  
 Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,  
 Faint murmurs from the meadows come,  
 Like hints and echoes of the world  
 To spirits folded in the womb.

## II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
 The fountain to his place returns  
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
 Here droops the banner on the tower,  
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
 The peacock in his laurel bower,  
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :  
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
 The mantles from the golden pegs  
 Droop sleepily : no sound is made



Not even of a gnat that sings.  
More like a picture seemeth all  
Than those old portraits of old kings.  
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

## IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there  
The wrinkled steward at his task.  
The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;  
The page has caught her hand in his :  
Her lips are sever'd as to speak :  
His own are pouted to a kiss :  
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

## V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
The beams, that through the oriel shine,  
Make prisms in every carven glass,  
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.  
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
His state the king reposing keeps.  
He must have been a jovial king.

## VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
At distance like a little wood ;  
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;  
All creeping plants, a wall of green  
Close-matted, bur and brake and brier,  
And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
High up, the topmost palace-spire.

## VII.

When will the hundred summers die,  
And thought and time be born again,  
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?  
Here all things in their place remain,  
As all were order'd, ages since.  
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,  
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

## THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

## I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
She lying on her couch alone,  
Across the purpled coverlet,  
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,  
On either side her tranced form  
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :  
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
Languidly ever ; and, amid  
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,  
Glow forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
With bracelets of the diamond bright :  
Her constant beauty doth inform  
Stillness with love, and day with light.

## III.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard  
In palace chambers far apart.  
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
That lie upon her charmed heart.

She sleeps : on either hand upswells  
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :  
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

### THE ARRIVAL.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
 To those that seek them issue forth ;  
 For love in sequel works with fate,  
 And draws the veil from hidden worth,  
 He travels far from other skies—  
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—  
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter-footed than the fox

### II.

'The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass,  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead :  
 " They perish'd in their daring deeds."  
 This proverb flashes through his head,  
 " The many fail : the one succeeds."

### III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks .  
 He breaks the hedge : he enters there :  
 The colour flies into his cheeks :  
 He trusts to light on something fair ;  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.



## IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind ;  
    'The Magic Music in his heart  
Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
    The quiet chamber far apart.  
His spirit flutters like a lark,  
    He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.  
“ Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
    How dark those hidden eyes must be ! ”

## THE REVIVAL.

A TOUCH, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.  
    There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
    And barking dogs, and crowing cocks,  
A fuller light illumined all,  
    A breeze through all the garden swept,  
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
    And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
    The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,  
The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
    The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,  
The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
    The palace bang'd, and buzz'd, and clackt,  
And all the long-pent stream of life  
    Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III.

And last with these the king awoke,  
    And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,  
    “ By holy rood, a royal beard ! ”

How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
 My beard has grown into my lap.'  
 The barons swore, with many words,  
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still  
 My joints are something stiff or so.  
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
 I mention'd half an hour ago?"  
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
 In courteous words return'd reply;  
 But dallied with his golden chain,  
 And, smiling, put the question by

## THE DEPARTURE

## I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
 And round her waist she felt it fold,  
 And far across the hills they went  
 In that new world which is the old:  
 Across the hills, and far away  
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
 And deep into the dying day  
 The happy princess follow'd him.

## II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,  
 O love, for such another kiss;"  
 "O wake for ever, love," she hears,  
 "O love, 'twas such as this and this.  
 And o'er them many a sliding star,  
 And many a merry wind was borne,  
 And, stream'd through many a golden bar,  
 The twilight melted into morn.

## III.

“ O eyes long laid in happy sleep ! ”  
“ O happy sleep, that lightly fled ! ”  
“ O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep ! ”  
“ O love, thy kiss would wake the dead ! ”  
And o'er them many a flowing range  
Of vapour buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt through many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

## IV.

“ A hundred summers ! can it be ?  
And whither goest thou, tell me where ? ”  
“ O seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders there. ”  
And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Through all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL.

## I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
Oh, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed-flower that simply blows ?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose ?

## II.

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
According as his humours lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.



And liberal applications lie  
 In Art like Nature, dearest friend ;  
 So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
 Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI.

You shake your head. A random string  
 Your finer female sense offends.  
 Well—were it not a pleasant thing  
 To fall asleep with all one's friends ;  
 To pass with all our social ties  
 To silence from the paths of men ;  
 And every hundred years to rise  
 And learn the world, and sleep again ;  
 To sleep through terms of mighty wars,  
 And wake on science grown to more,  
 On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
 As wild as aught of fairy lore ;  
 And all that else the years will show,  
 The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
 The vast Republics that may grow,  
 The Federations and the Powers ;  
 Titanic forces taking birth  
 In divers seasons, divers climes ;  
 For we are Ancients of the earth,  
 And in the morning of the times

## II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
 Through sunny decads new and strange,  
 Or gay quinquenniads would we reap  
 The flower and quintessence of change.

## III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might !  
 So much your eyes my fancy take—

Be still the first to leap to light  
 'That I might kiss those eyes awake !  
 For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 To choose your own you did not care ;  
 You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
 And I will take my pleasure there :  
 And, am I right, or am I wrong,  
 My fancy, ranging through and through,  
 To search a meaning for the song,  
 Perforce will still revert to you ;  
 Nor finds a closer truth than this  
 All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
 And evermore a costly kiss  
 The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV.

For since the time when Adam first  
 Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
 And every bird of Eden burst  
 In carol, every bud to flower,  
 What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes ?  
 What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd ?  
 Where on the double rosebud droops  
 The fulness of the pensive mind ;  
 Which all too dearly self-involved,  
 Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me ;  
 A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
 That lets thee neither hear nor see :  
 But break it. In the name of wife,  
 And in the rights that name may give,  
 Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
 And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
 And, if you find a meaning there,  
 O whisper to your glass, and say,  
 " What wonder, if he thinks me fair ? "

What wonder I was all unwise,  
To shape the song for your delight,  
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise,  
That float through heaven, and cannot light?  
Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—  
But take it—earnest wed with sport,  
And either sacred unto you.

### AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,  
But it is wild and barren,  
A garden too with scarce a tree,  
And waster than a warren :  
Yet say the neighbours when they call,  
It is not bad but good land,  
And in it is the germ of all  
That grows within the woodland.

Oh had I lived when song was great  
In days of old Amphion,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
Nor cared for seed or scion !  
And had I lived when song was great,  
And legs of trees were limber,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
And fiddled in the timber !

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
Such happy intonation,  
Wherever he sat down and sung  
He left a small plantation ;  
Wherever in a lonely grove  
He set up his forlorn pipes,  
The gouty oak began to move,  
And flounder into hornpipes.



The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
And, as tradition teaches,  
Young ashes pirouetted down  
Coquetting with young beeches ;  
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
Ran forward to his rhyming,  
And from the valleys underneath  
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
And down the middle, buzz ! she went  
With all her bees behind her :  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers gallopaded.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,  
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves  
Look'd down, half-pleas'd, half-frighten'd,  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;

So youthful and so flexile then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the twigs,  
And make her dance attendance ;  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs  
And scirrhou roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle ;  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading :  
O Lord !—'tis in my neighbour's ground,  
The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening through there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees,  
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbours clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, though fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy ;  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.

Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work through months of toil,  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation.  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom :  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom.

## ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
Are sparkling to the moon :  
My breath to heaven like vapour goes :  
May my soul follow soon !  
The shadows of the convent-towers  
Slant down the snowy sward,  
Still creeping with the creeping hours  
That lead me to my Lord :  
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear  
As are the frosty skies,  
Or this first snowdrop of the year  
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,  
To yonder shining ground ;  
As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
To yonder argent round ;  
So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
My spirit before Thee :  
So in mine earthly house I am,  
To that I hope to be.



Break up the heavens, O Lord ! and far,  
 Through all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;  
 The flashes come and go ;  
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
 And strows her lights below,  
 And deepens on and up ! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide—  
 A light upon the shining sea—  
 The Bridegroom with his bride !

### SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel.  
 The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,  
 The horse and rider reel :  
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists ;  
 And when the tide of combat stands,  
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
 On whom their favours fall !  
 For them I battle till the end,  
 To save from shame and thrall :

But all my heart is drawn above,  
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine :  
I never felt the kiss of love,  
Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;  
So keep I fair through faith and prayer  
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
A light before me swims,  
Between dark stems the forest glows,  
I hear a noise of hymns :  
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;  
I hear a voice, but none are there ;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain meres  
I find a magic bark ;  
I leap on board : no helmsman steers :  
I float till all is dark.  
A gentle sound, an awful light !  
Three angels bear the holy Grail :  
With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.  
Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !  
My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
As down dark tides the glory slides,  
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
Through dreaming towns I go,

The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,  
The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, spins from brand and mail :  
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear ;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odours haunt my dreams ;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armour that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And through the mountain walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
“ O just and faithful knight of God !  
Ride on ! the prize is near.”  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.



## EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town  
Met me walking on yonder way;  
“And have you lost your heart?” she said;  
“And are you married yet, Edward Gray?”

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me.  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more  
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

“Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's will :  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

“Shy she was, and I thought her cold-  
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea ;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

“Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
‘You're too slight and fickle,’ I said,  
‘To trouble the heart of Edward Gray.

“There I put my face in the grass—  
Whisper'd, ‘Listen to my despair :  
I repent me of all I did :  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !’

“Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
‘Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
And here the heart of Edward Gray !’

“ Love may come, and love may go,  
 And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree :  
 But I will love no more, no more,  
 Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

“ Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
 Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
 There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
 And there the heart of Edward Gray ! ”

## WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,  
 To which I most resort,  
 How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
 Go fetch a pint of port :  
 But let it not be such as that  
 You set before chance-comers,  
 But such whose father-grape grew fat  
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
 But may she still be kind,  
 And whisper lovely words, and use  
 Her influence on the mind,  
 To make me write my random rhymes,  
 Ere they be half-forgotten ;  
 Nor add and alter, many times,  
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
 Her laurel in the wine,  
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
 These favour'd lips of mine ;

Until the charm have power to make  
 New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
 And barren commonplaces break  
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board ;  
 Her gradual fingers steal  
 And touch upon the master-chord  
 Of all I felt and feel.  
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
 And phantom hopes assemble ;  
 And that child's heart within the man's  
 Begins to move and tremble.

Through many an hour of summer suns  
 By many pleasant ways,  
 Against its fountain upward runs  
 The current of my days :  
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;  
 The gas-light wavers dimmer ;  
 And softly, through a vinous mist,  
 My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
 Unboding critic-pen,  
 Or that eternal want of pence  
 Which vexes public men,  
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
 For that which all deny them--  
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
 And all the world go by them.

Ah, yet, though all the world forsake,  
 Though fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.



Let Whig and Tory stir their blood ;  
There must be stormy weather ,  
But for some true result of good  
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes :  
If old things, there are new ;  
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
Yet glimpses of the true.  
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
As on this whirligig of Time  
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;  
With fair horizons bound :  
This whole wide earth of light and shade  
Comes out, a perfect round.  
High over roaring Temple-bar,  
And, set in Heaven's third story,  
I look at all things as they are,  
But through a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest  
Half-mused, or reeling-ripe,  
The pint, you brought me, was the best  
That ever came from pipe.  
But though the port surpasses praise.  
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
Is there some magic in the place?  
Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
No pint of white or red  
Had ever half the power to turn  
This wheel within my head,

Which bears a season'd brain about,  
 Unsubject to confusion,  
 Though soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
 Through every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
 With many kinsmen gay,  
 Where long and largely we carouse  
 As who shall say me nay :  
 Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
 We drink defying trouble,  
 Or sometimes two would meet in one.  
 And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery-new,  
 Or, elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
 As old as Waterloo ;  
 Or stow'd (when classic Canning died)  
 In musty bins and chambers,  
 Had cast upon its crusty side  
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
 She answer'd to my call,  
 She changes with that mood or this,  
 Is all-in-all to all :  
 She lit the spark within my throat,  
 To make my blood run quicker,  
 Used all her fiery will, and smote  
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
 The waiter's hands, that reach  
 To each his perfect pint of stout,  
 His proper chop to each.

He looks not like the common breed  
That with the napkin dally ;  
I think he came like Ganymede,  
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
Than modern poultry drop,  
Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;  
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
Crow'd lustier late and early,  
Sipt wine from silver, praising God  
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
Till in a court he saw  
A something-pottle-bodied boy  
That knuckled at the taw :  
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good.  
Flew over roof and casement :  
His brothers of the weather stood  
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe, and spire,  
And follow'd with acclaims,  
A sign to many a staring shire,  
Came crowing over Thames.  
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
Till, where the street grows straiter,  
One fix'd for ever at the door,  
And one became head-waiter.

---

But whither would my fancy go?  
How out of place she makes  
The violet of a legend blow  
Among the chops and steaks !



'Tis but a steward of the can,  
 One shade more plump than common ;  
 As just and mere a serving-man  
 As any, born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down  
 Into the common day ?  
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
 Which I shall have to pay ?  
 For, something duller than at first,  
 Nor wholly comfortable,  
 I sit (my empty glass reversed),  
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife  
 I take myself to task ;  
 Lest of the fulness of my life  
 I leave an empty flask :  
 For I had hope, by something rare,  
 To prove myself a poet ;  
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
 'Till they be gather'd up ;  
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
 Will haunt the vacant cup :  
 And others' follies teach us not,  
 Nor much their wisdom teaches ;  
 And most, of sterling worth, is what  
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !  
 We know not what we know.  
 But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone—  
 'Tis gone, and let it go.

'Tis gone : a thousand such have slipt  
Away from my embraces,  
And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went  
Long since, and came no more ;  
With peals of genial clamour sent  
From many a tavern-door,  
With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
From misty men of letters ;  
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—  
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks  
Had yet their native glow ;  
Nor yet the fear of little books  
Had made him talk for show ;  
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
He flash'd his random speeches ;  
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
Like all good things on earth !  
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,  
At half thy real worth ?  
I hold it good, good things should pass :  
With time I will not quarrel :  
It is but yonder empty glass  
That makes me maudlin-moral.

---

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
To which I most resort,  
I too must part : I hold thee dear  
For this good pint of port.

For this, thou shalt from all things suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter ;  
 And, wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots :  
 Thy latter days increas'd with pence  
 Go down among the pots :  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

*We* fret, *we* fume, would shift our skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot ;  
*Thy* care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot ;  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head  
 The thick-set hazel dies ;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes :  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more,



No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,  
 Shall show thee pass'd to Heaven :  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath.  
 A pint-pot, neatly graven.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

Cursed be he that moves my bones."--*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
 If such be worth the winning now,  
 And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
 Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
 A life that moves to gracious ends  
 Through troops of unrecording friends,  
 A deedful life, a silent voice :

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom  
 Of those that wear the Poet's crown :  
 Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
 Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die  
 Nor leave his music as of old,  
 But round him ere he scarce be cold  
 Begins the scandal and the cry :

" Proclaim the faults he would not show :  
 Break lock and seal : betray the trust :  
 Keep nothing sacred : 'tis but just  
 The many-headed beast should know."

Ah shameless ! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its worth ;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best :  
His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave  
Who will not let his ashes rest !

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
The little life of bank and brier,  
The bird that pipes his lone desire  
And dies unheard within his tree,

'Than he that warbles long and loud  
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
For whom the carrion vulture waits  
To tear his heart before the crowd !

## TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
The long divine Peneïan pass,  
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
With such a pencil, such a pen,  
You shadow forth to distant men,  
I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
And track'd you still on classic ground,  
I grew in gladness till I found  
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
And glisten'd—here and there alone  
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown  
By fountain-urns ;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
 Of cavern pillars ; on the swell  
 The silver lily heaved and fell ;  
 And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
 By dancing rivulets fed his flocks,  
 To him who sat upon the rocks,  
 And fluted to the morning sea.

### LADY CLARE.

IT was the time when lilies blow,  
 And clouds are highest up in air,  
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe  
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn :  
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they :  
 'They two will wed the morrow morn ;  
 God's blessing on the day !

"He does not love me for my birth,  
 Nor for my lands so broad and fair ;  
 He loves me for my own true worth,  
 And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
 Said, " Who was this that went from thee ?"  
 " It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,  
 " To-morrow he weds with me."

" O God be thank'd !" said Alice the nurse,  
 " That all comes round so just and fair :  
 Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
 And you are not the Lady Clare."



“Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?”

Said Lady Clare, “that ye speak so wild?”

“As God’s above,” said Alice the nurse,

“I speak the truth : you are my child.

“The old Earl’s daughter died at my breast ;

I speak the truth, as I live by bread !

I buried her like my own sweet child,

And put my child in her stead.”

“Falsely, falsely have ye done,

O mother,” she said, “if this be true,

To keep the best man under the sun

So many years from his due.”

“Nay now, my child,” said Alice the nurse,

“But keep the secret for your life,

And all you have will be Lord Ronald’s

When you are man and wife.”

“If I’m a beggar born,” she said,

I will speak out, for I dare not lie.

Pull off, pull off the brooch of gold,

And fling the diamond necklace by.”

“Nay now, my child,” said Alice the nurse,

“But keep the secret all ye can.”

She said, “Not so ; but I will know

If there be any faith in man.”

“Nay now, what faith?” said Alice the nurse.

“The man will cleave unto his right.”

“And he shall have it,” the lady replied,

Though I should die to-night.”

“Yet give one kiss to your mother dear !

Alas, my child, I sinn’d for thee.”

“O mother, mother, mother,” she said,

“So strange it seems to me.

“ Yet here’s a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go.”

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare :  
She went by dale, and she went by down,  
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought  
Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden’s hand,  
And follow’d her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower :  
“ O Lady Clare, you shame your worth !  
Why come you drest like a village maid,  
That are the flower of the earth ? ”

“ If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are :  
I am a beggar born,” she said,  
“ And not the Lady Clare.”

“ Play me no tricks,” said Lord Ronald.  
“ For I am yours in word and in deed.  
Play me no tricks,” said Lord Ronald,  
“ Your riddle is hard to read.”

Oh and proudly stood she up !  
Her heart within her did not fail :  
She look’d into Lord Ronald’s eyes,  
And told him all her nurse’s tale.

He laugh’d a laugh of merry scorn :  
He turn’d and kiss’d her where she stood.  
“ If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,” said he, “ the next in blood—

“If you are not the heiress born,  
And I,” said he, “the lawful heir,  
We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
And you shall still be Lady Clare.”

## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

IN her ear he whispers gaily,  
“If my heart by signs can tell,  
Maiden, I have watch’d thee daily,  
And I think thou lov’st me well.”  
She replies, in accents fainter,  
“There is none I love like thee.”  
He is but a landscape-painter,  
And a village maiden she.  
He to lips, that fondly falter,  
Presses his without reproof;  
Leads her to the village altar,  
And they leave her father’s roof.  
“I can make no marriage present;  
Little can I give my wife.  
Love will make our cottage pleasant.  
And I love thee more than life.”  
They by parks and lodges going  
See the lordly castles stand:  
Summer woods, about them blowing,  
Made a murmur in the land.  
From deep thought himself he rouses,  
Says to her that loves him well,  
“Let us see these handsome houses  
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.”  
So she goes by him attended,  
Hears him lovingly converse,  
Sees whatever fair and splendid  
Lay betwixt his home and hers;



Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
Parks and order'd gardens great,  
Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
Built for pleasure and for state.  
All he shows her makes him dearer  
Evermore she seems to gaze  
On that cottage growing nearer,  
Where they twain will spend their days.  
Oh but she will love him truly !  
He shall have a cheerful home ;  
She will order all things duly,  
When beneath his roof they come.  
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
Till a gateway she discerns  
With armorial bearings stately,  
And beneath the gate she turns ;  
Sees a mansion more majestic  
Than all those she saw before :  
Many a gallant gay domestic  
Bows before him at the door.  
And they speak in gentle murmur,  
When they answer to his call,  
While he treads with footstep firmer  
Leading on from hall to hall.  
And, while now she wonders blindly  
Nor the meaning can divine,  
Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
" All of this is mine and thine."  
Here he lives in state and bounty,  
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
Not a lord in all the county  
Is so great a lord as he.  
All at once the colour flushes  
Her sweet face from brow to chin :  
As it were with shame she blushes  
And her spirit changed within.

Then her countenance all over  
Pale again as death did prove :  
But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
So she strove against her weakness,  
Though at times her spirit sank :  
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness  
To all duties of her rank :  
And a gentle consort made he,  
And her gentle mind was such  
That she grew a noble lady,  
And the people loved her much.  
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
With the burthen of an honour  
Unto which she was not born.  
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
As she murmur'd, " Oh, that he  
Were once more that landscape-painter  
Which did win my heart from me !"  
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
Fading slowly from his side :  
Three fair children first she bore him,  
Then before her time she died.  
Weeping, weeping late and early,  
Walking up and pacing down,  
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
And he came to look upon her,  
And he look'd at her and said,  
" Bring the dress and put it on her,  
That she wore when she was wed.  
Then her people, softly treading,  
Bore to earth her body, drest  
In the dress that she was wed in,  
That her spirit might have rest.

## SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

## A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven again  
The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.

In crystal vapour everywhere  
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,  
And, far in forest-deeps unseen,  
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green  
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :  
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,  
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran,  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode through the coverts of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous Spring :  
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before ;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet  
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :



And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains  
Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
By night to eery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland rings  
With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast through sun and shade,  
The happy winds upon her play'd,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :  
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd  
The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his worldly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

## A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver :  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet then a river :  
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver ;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver ;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

## THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid ;  
She was more fair than words can say :  
Barefooted came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stept down,  
'To meet and greet her on her way :  
"It is no wonder," said the lords,  
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen :  
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.  
So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been :  
Cophetua sware a royal oath :  
"This beggar maid shall be my queen !"

## THE VISION OF SIN.

I HAD a vision when the night was late :  
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.  
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,  
But that his heavy rider kept him down.  
And from the palace came a child of sin,  
And took him by the curls, and led him in,  
Where sat a company with heated eyes,  
Expecting when a fountain should arise :  
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—  
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—  
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,  
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

## II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,  
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;  
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled  
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,  
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,  
Panted hand in hand with faces pale.  
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;  
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide  
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;  
Then the music touch'd the gates and died ;  
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,  
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;  
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,  
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,  
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and palpitated ;  
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
Flung the torrent rainbow round :  
Then they started from their places,  
Moved with violence, changed in hue,  
Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,  
Wheeling with precipitate paces  
To the melody, till they flew,  
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,  
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,  
Like to Furies, like to Graces,  
Dash'd together in blinding dew :  
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,  
The nerve-dissolving melody  
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

## III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,  
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :



I saw that every morning, far withdrawn  
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made himself an awful rose of dawn,  
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,  
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month and year,  
Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,  
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :  
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken.  
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace-gate,  
And link'd again. I saw within my head  
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as Death,  
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,  
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

## IV.

“ Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin !  
Here is custom come your way ;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

“ Bitter barmaid, waning fast !  
See that sheets are on my bed :  
What ! the flower of life is past .  
It is long before you wed.

“ Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
At the Dragon on the heath !  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

“ I am old, but let me drink ;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine ,  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

“ Wine is good for shrivell’d lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamp’d in clay.

“ Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :  
What care I for any name ?  
What for order or degree ?

“ Let me screw thee up a peg :  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :  
Callest thou that thing a leg ?  
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

“ Thou shalt not be saved by works :  
Thou hast been a sinner too :  
Ruin’d trunks on wither’d forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you !

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

“ We are men of ruin’d blood ;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

“ Name and fame ! to fly sublime  
Through the courts, the camps, the schools,  
Is to be the ball of Time,  
Banded by the hands of fools.

“ Friendship !—to be two in one—  
Let the canting liar pack !  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back.

“ Virtue !—to be good and just—  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

“ Oh ! we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbour's wife.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can :  
Have a rouse before the morn :  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

“ Drink, and let the parties rave •  
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean.

“ He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

“ Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gaily doth she tread •  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

“ No, I love not what is new :  
She is of an ancient house ;  
And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.



“ Let her go ! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs :  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

“ Drink to lofty hopes that cool—  
Visions of a perfect State :  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

“ Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

“ Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;  
Set thy hoary fancies free ;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savours well to thee and me.

“ Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

“ Tell me tales of thy first love—  
April hopes, the fools of chance ;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

“ Fill the can, and fill the cup :  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

“ Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads :  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

“ You are bones, and what of that?  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

“ Death is king, and Vivat Rex !  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam—if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones.

“ No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye—nor yet your lip :  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

“ Lo ! God's likeness—the ground-plan—  
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed :  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed !

“ Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance  
While we keep a little breath !  
Drink to heavy Ignorance !  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

“ Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near :  
What ! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

“ Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

“ Fill the cup, and fill the can !  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !  
Dregs of life, and lees of man :  
Yet we will not die forlorn.”

## V.

The voice grew faint : there came a further change :  
 Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :  
 Below were men and horses pierced with worms,  
 And slowly quickening into lower forms ;  
 By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,  
 Old splash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.  
 Then some one spake : " Behold ! it was a crime  
 Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."  
 Another said : " The crime of sense became  
 The crime of malice, and is equal blame."  
 And one : " He had not wholly quench'd his power ;  
 A little grain of conscience made him sour."  
 At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
 Cry to the summit, " Is there any hope ? "  
 To which an answer peal'd from that high land,  
 But in a tongue no man could understand ;  
 And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

## COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD.

COME not, when I am dead,  
 To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,  
 To trample round my fallen head,  
 And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.  
 There let the wind sweep and the plover cry ;  
 But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime  
 I care no longer, being all unblest :  
 Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,  
 And I desire to rest.  
 Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie :  
 Go by, go by.



## THE EAGLE.

## FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with hooked hands :  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

## MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow .  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O happy planet, eastward go ;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

## BREAK, BREAK, BREAK.

BREAK, break, break,  
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea !  
And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

Oh well for the fisherman's boy,  
That he shouts with his sister at play ;  
Oh well for the sailor lad,  
That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on  
To their haven under the hill ;  
But oh for the touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still !  
Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

## THE POET'S SONG.

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He pass'd by the town and out of the street ;  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the wheat ;  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,  
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.  
The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
And the nightingale thought, " I have sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away."

## THE BROOK.

## AN IDYL.

" HERE, by this brook, we parted ; I to the East  
And he for Italy—too late—too late :  
One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;  
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,  
And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;

Nor could he understand how money breeds,  
 Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make  
 The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
 Oh had he lived ! In our school-books we say,  
 Of those that held their heads above the crowd,  
 They flourish'd then or then ; but life in him  
 Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd  
 On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
 When all the wood stands in a mist of green,  
 And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,  
 For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
 Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air,  
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
 To me that loved him ; for ' O brook,' he says,  
 ' O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,  
 ' Whence come you ? ' and the brook, why not ? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
 I make a sudden sally,  
 And sparkle out among the fern,  
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
 Or slip between the ridges,  
 By twenty thorps, a little town,  
 And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
 To join the brimming river :  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

" Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,  
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,  
 It has more ivy ; there the river ; and there  
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
 In little sharps and trebles,  
 I bubble into eddying bays,  
 I babble on the pebbles.



With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river :  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

“ But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird ;  
Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel.

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river :  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

“ O darling Katie Willows, his one child !  
A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

“ Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.  
For here I came, twenty years back—the week

Before I parted with poor Edmund ; cross'd  
 By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
 Beyond it, where the waters marry—cross'd,  
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
 And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,  
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,  
 Stuck ; and he clamour'd from a casement, ' Run,  
 To Katie somewhere in the walks below—  
 ' Run, Katie ! ' Katie never ran : she moved  
 To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,  
 A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
 Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

" What was it ? less of sentiment than sense  
 Had Katie ; not illiterate ; neither one  
 Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
 And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,  
 Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

" She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why ?  
 What cause of quarrel ? None, she said, no cause ;  
 James had no cause : but when I press'd the cause,  
 I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
 Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James ? I said.  
 But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,  
 And sketching with her slender pointed foot  
 Some figure like a wizard's pentagram  
 On garden gravel, let my query pass  
 Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
 If James were coming. ' Coming every day,'  
 She answer'd ' ever longing to explain,  
 But evermore her father came across  
 With some long-winded tale, and broke him short ;  
 And James departed vexed with him and her.'  
 How could I help her ? ' Would I—was it wrong ?  
 (Clasp'd hands and that petitionary grace



Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)  
'O would I take her father for one hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me !'  
And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

"O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake !  
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
To show the farm : full willingly he rose :  
He led me through the short sweet-smelling lanes  
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his machines ;  
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs ;  
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens ;  
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts :  
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took  
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,  
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were :  
Then cross'd the common into Darnley chase  
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern  
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said,  
'That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.  
And there he told a long long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,  
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,  
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,  
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
He gave them line : and five days after that  
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd something more,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;



He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;  
 He gave them line : and how by chance at last  
 (It might be May or April, he forgot,  
 The last of April or the first of May)  
 He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
 And, talking from the point, he drew him in,  
 And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,  
 Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

“ Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he—  
 Poor fellow, could he help it?—recommenced,  
 And ran through all the coltish chronicle,  
 Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
 Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt  
 Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
 Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
 And with me Philip, talking still ; and so  
 We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,  
 And following our own shadows thrice as long  
 As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,  
 Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
 Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots ;  
 I slide by hazel covers ;  
 I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
 That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
 Among my skimming swallows ;  
 I make the netted sunbeam dance  
 Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
 In brambly wildernesses ;  
 I linger by my shingly bars ;  
 I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow  
 To join the brimming river :  
 For men may come and men may go,  
 But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :  
I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge.  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;  
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,  
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within :  
Then, wondering, ask'd her, " Are you from the farm ? "  
" Yes," answer'd she. " Pray stay a little : pardon me ;  
What do they call you ? " " Katie. " " That were strange.  
What surname ? " " Willows. " " No ! " " That is my name. "  
" Indeed ! " and here he look'd so self-perplex'd,  
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he  
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
Then looking at her ; " Too happy, fresh and fair,  
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
About these meadows, twenty years ago. "



“Have you not heard?” said Katie, “we came back.  
 We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
 Am I so like her? so they said on board.  
 Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
 My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
 That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
 My brother James is in the harvest-field:  
 But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!”

## THE LETTERS.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
 A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
 I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
 And saw the altar cold and bare.  
 A clog of lead was round my feet,  
 A band of pain across my brow;  
 “Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
 Before you hear my marriage vow.”

### II.

I turn'd, and humm'd a bitter song,  
 That mock'd the wholesome human heart;  
 And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
 We met, but only meant to part.  
 Full cold my greeting was and dry;  
 She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;  
 I saw with half-unconscious eye  
 She wore the colours I approved.

### III.

She took the little ivory chest,  
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
 Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
 And gave my letters back to me.



And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

## IV.

She told me all her friends had said ;  
I raged against the public liar ;  
She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of fire.  
“ No more of love ; your sex is known :  
I never will be twice deceived.  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.

## V.

“ Through slander, meanest spawn of Hell  
(And women's slander is the worst),  
And you, whom once I loved so well,  
Through you, my life will be accurst.”  
I spoke with heart, and heat, and force ;  
I shook her breast with vague alarms.  
Like torrents from a mountain source  
We rush'd into each other's arms.

## VI.

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
And sweet the vapour-braided blue,  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I drew.  
The very graves appear'd to smile,  
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells :  
“ Dark porch,” I said, “ and silent aisle,  
There comes a sound of marriage bells.”

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

### I.

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,  
Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,  
Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

### II.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?  
Here, in streaming London's central roar.  
Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

### III.

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,  
And let the mournful martial music blow ;  
The last great Englishman is low

### IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.  
No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
Whole in himself, a common good.

Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
 Great in council and great in war,  
 Foremost captain of his time,  
 Rich in saving common-sense,  
 And, as the greatest only are,  
 In his simplicity sublime.  
 O good gray head which all men knew,  
 O voice from which their omens all men drew,  
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
 O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
 Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew !  
 Such was he whom we deplore.  
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
 The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

## v.

All is over and done :  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 England, for thy son.  
 Let the bell be toll'd.  
 Render thanks to the Giver,  
 And render him to the mould.  
 Under the cross of gold  
 That shines over city and river,  
 There he shall rest for ever  
 Among the wise and the bold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd :  
 And a reverent people behold  
 The towering car, the sable steeds :  
 Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds,  
 Dark in its funeral fold.  
 Let the bell be toll'd :  
 And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;  
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd  
 Through the dome of the golden cross ;



And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;  
He knew their voices of old.  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's-ear has heard them boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom ;  
When he with those deep voices wrought,  
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;  
With those deep voices our dead captain taught  
The tyrant, and asserts his claim  
In that dread sound to the great name,  
Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
In praise and in dispraise the same,  
A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,  
To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-ringing avenues of song.

## VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an honour'd guest,  
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,  
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest ?  
Mighty seaman, this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea.  
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man.  
The greatest sailor since our world began.  
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;  
For this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea ;  
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;  
O give him welcome, this is he,  
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
And worthy to be laid by thee ;  
For this is England's greatest son,  
He that gain'd a hundred fights,

Nor ever lost an English gun ;  
 This is he that far away  
 Against the myriads of Assaye  
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;  
 And underneath another sun,  
 Warring on a later day,  
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
 The treble works, the vast designs  
 Of his labour'd rampart-lines,  
 Where he greatly stood at bay.  
 Whence he issued forth anew,  
 And ever great and greater grew,  
 Beating from the wasted vines  
 Back to France her banded swarms,  
 Back to France with countless blows  
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
 Past the Pyrenean pines,  
 Follow'd up in valley and glen  
 With blare of bugle, clamour of men,  
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
 And England pouring on her foes.  
 Such a war had such a close.  
 Again their ravening eagle rose  
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,  
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;  
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
 On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;  
 A day of onsets of despair !  
 Dash'd on every rocky square  
 Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;  
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;  
 Through the long-tormented air  
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
 And down we swept and charged and overthrew.  
 So great a soldier taught us there,  
 What long-enduring hearts could do  
 In that world's-earthquake. Waterloo !



Mighty seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at all,  
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !  
And through the centuries let a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame,  
A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## VII.

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.  
Though all men else their nobler dreams forget,  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;  
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
His Saxon in blown seas and storming showers,  
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.  
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;  
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul  
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
And save the one true seed of freedom sown  
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
That sober freedom out of which there springs  
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;  
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
And drill the raw world for the march of mind.



Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just  
 But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
 Remember him who led your hosts ;  
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;  
 His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever ; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent ; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent ; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow  
 Through either babbling world of high and low ;  
 Whose life was work, whose language rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;  
 Who never spoke against a foe ;  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on the right :  
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named :  
 Truth-lover was our English Duke ;  
 Whatever record leap to light  
 He never shall be shamed.

## VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open hands  
 Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great,  
 But as he saves or serves the state.  
 Not once or twice in our rough island-story,  
 The path of duty was the way to glory :  
 He that walks it, only thirsting

For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outredden  
All voluptuous garden-roses.  
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Through the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.  
Such was he : his work is done.  
But while the races of mankind endure,  
Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure ;  
Till in all lands and through all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory :  
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame  
For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,  
Eternal honour to his name.

## IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see :  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung :  
O peace, it is a day of pain



For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain  
 Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.  
 Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
 More than is of man's degree  
 Must be with us, watching here  
 At this, our great solemnity.  
 Whom we see not we revere.  
 We revere, and we refrain  
 From talk of battles loud and vain,  
 And brawling memories all too free  
 For such a wise humility  
 As befits a solemn fane :  
 We revere, and while we hear  
 The tides of Music's golden sea  
 Setting toward eternity,  
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
 Until we doubt not that for one so true  
 There must be other nobler work to do  
 Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
 And Victor he must ever be.  
 For though the Giant Ages heave the hill  
 And break the shore, and evermore  
 Make and break, and work their will ;  
 Though world on world in myriad myriads roll  
 Round us, each with different powers,  
 And other forms of life than ours,  
 What know we greater than the soul ?  
 On God and Godlike men we build our trust.  
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears :  
 The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears :  
 The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;  
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;  
 He is gone who seem'd so great.—  
 Gone ; but nothing can bereave him  
 Of the force he made his own  
 Being here, and we believe him  
 Something far advanced in State,



And that he wears a truer crown  
 Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
 But speak no more of his renown,  
 Lay your earthly fancies down,  
 And in the vast cathedral leave him.  
 God accept him, Christ receive him.

## THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,  
 In lands of palm and southern pine ;  
     In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
 Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìa show'd  
 In ruin, by the mountain road ;  
     How like a gem, beneath, the city  
 Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
     To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
 That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;  
     Where, here and there, on sandy beaches  
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
 Yet present in his natal grove,  
     Now watching high on mountain cornice,  
 And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;  
 Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
     I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
 And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;  
    But distant colour, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green ;  
    Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;  
    And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, though white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
    A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours ;  
    What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
    Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Through cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we cross'd the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ;  
    Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;  
    Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory !  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como ; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we pass'd

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on the Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splügen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.



It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.

O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold :

Yet here to-night in this dark city  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, though crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nursling of another sky

Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens heaven and earth.

The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,

Perchance, to dream you still beside me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

## TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
Godfather, come and see your boy :

Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,

Should eighty thousand college-councils  
Thunder " Anathema, " friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome  
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand ;  
And farther on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on through zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin ;  
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;  
Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;  
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd  
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear ;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.

*January, 1854.*

## WILL.

Oh well for him whose will is strong !  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :  
For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

## II.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,  
And ever weaker grows through acted crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still !  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.



## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
“Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns!” he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## II.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”  
Was there a man dismay’d?  
Not though the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder’d:  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

## III.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley’d and thunder’d;  
Storm’d at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

## IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,  
Sabring the gunners there,  
Charging an army, while  
    All the world wonder'd :  
Plung'd in the battery-smoke,  
Right through the line they broke :  
Cossack and Russian  
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
    Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
Then they rode back—but not,  
    Not the six hundred.

## V.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon behind them  
    Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
While horse and hero fell,  
They that had fought so well  
Came through the jaws of Death,  
Back from the mouth of Hell,  
All that was left of them,  
    Left of six hundred.

## VI.

When can their glory fade ?  
Oh the wild charge they made !  
    All the world wonder'd.  
Honour the charge they made !  
Honour the Light Brigade,  
    Noble six hundred !

# THE PRINCESS:

## A MEDLEY.

### PROLOGUE.

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day  
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun  
Up to the people : thither flock'd at noon  
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half  
The neighbouring borough with their Institute  
Of which he was the patron. I was there  
From college, visiting the son—the son  
A Walter too—with others of our set,  
Five others : we were seven at Vivian Place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,  
Greek, set with busts : from vases in the hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,  
Grew side by side ; and on the pavement lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey ruin in the park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time ;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together—celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs  
From the isles of palm ; and higher on the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.

And “ This,” he said, “ was Hugh's at Agincourt ;  
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon :



A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle  
With all about him "—which he brought, and I  
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,  
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings  
Who laid about them at their wills and died ;  
And mix'd with these, a lady, one that arm'd  
Her own fair head, and sallying through the gate,  
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

" O miracle of women," said the book,  
" O noble heart who, being strait-besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,  
But now, when all was lost or seem'd as lost—  
Her stature more than mortal in the burst  
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—  
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,  
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,  
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,  
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,  
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,  
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook :  
O miracle of noble womanhood ! "

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;  
And, I all rapt in this, " Come out," he said,  
" To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth  
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went  
(I kept the book, and had my finger in it)  
Down through the park : strange was the sight to me ;  
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown  
With happy faces and with holiday.  
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads :  
The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone  
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,  
The fountain of the moment, playing now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,  
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball  
Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down  
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired  
A cannon : Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields : and here were telescopes  
For azure views ; and there a group of girls  
In circle waited, whom the electric shock  
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter : round the lake  
A little clockwork steamer paddling plied  
And shook the lilies : perch'd about the knolls  
A dozen angry models jetted steam :  
A petty railway ran : a fire balloon  
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves  
And dropt a fairy parachute and pass'd ;  
And there through twenty posts of telegraph  
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro  
Between the mimic stations ; so that sport  
Went hand in hand with Science. Otherwhere  
Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd  
And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd about  
Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids  
Arranged a country dance, and flew through light  
And shadow, while the twangling violin  
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead  
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime  
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time ;  
And long we gazed, but satiated at length  
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,  
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,  
Through one wide chasm of time and frost they gave  
The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within  
The sward was trim as any garden lawn :  
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,  
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends



From neighbour seats ; and there was Ralph himself,  
A broken statue propt against the wall,  
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
Half child half woman as she was, had wound  
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,  
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook  
Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast  
Shone, silver-set : about it lay the guests,  
And there we joined them : then the maiden Aunt  
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd  
An universal culture for the crowd,  
And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told  
Of college : he had climb'd across the spikes,  
And he had squeez'd himself betwixt the bars,  
And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs ; and one  
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men  
But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;  
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain  
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw  
The feudal warrior lady-clad : which brought  
My book to mind : and opening this I read  
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang  
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her  
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,  
And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"  
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay  
Beside him), "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia, "There are thousands now  
Such women, but convention beats them down :  
It is but bringing up ; no more than that :  
You men have done it : how I hate you all !  
Ah, were I something great !—I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,



That love to keep us children ! Oh I wish  
That I were some great Princess, I would build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are taught ;  
We are twice as quick ! " And here she shook aside  
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling, " Pretty were the sight  
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt  
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,  
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.  
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,  
But move as rich as emperor-moths, or Ralph  
Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,  
If there were many Lilies in the brood,  
However deep you might embower the nest,  
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sword  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandall'd foot :  
" That's your light way ; but I would make it death  
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd ;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make her, she ;  
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,  
And " petty Ogress," and " ungrateful Puss,"  
And swore he long'd at College, only long'd,  
All else was well, for she society.  
They boated and they cricketed ; they talk'd  
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;  
They lost their weeks, they vex'd the souls of deans ;  
They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,  
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,  
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian Place,  
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,  
Part banter, part affection.

“ True,” she said,  
 “ We doubt not that. Oh yes, you miss’d us much.  
 I’ll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.”

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns  
 Up through gilt wires a crafty loving eye,  
 And takes a lady’s finger with all care,  
 And bites it for true heart and not for harm,  
 So he with Lilia’s. Daintily she shriek’d  
 And wrung it. “ Doubt my word again ! ” he said.  
 “ Come, listen ! here is proof that you were miss’d :  
 We seven stay’d at Christmas up to read ;  
 And there we took one tutor as to read :  
 The hard-grain’d Muses of the cube and square  
 Were out of season : never man, I think,  
 So moulder’d in a sinecure as he :  
 For while our cloisters echo’d frosty feet,  
 And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,  
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all  
 In wassail ; often, like as many girls—  
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—  
 As many little trifling Lilies—play’d  
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,  
 And *what’s my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,  
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth,  
 As here at Christmas.”

She remembered that :  
 A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it more  
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.  
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,  
 She wonder’d, by themselves ?

A half-disdain  
 Perch’d on the pouted blossom of her lips :  
 And Walter nodded at me ; “ *He* began,  
 The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so  
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ? what kind ?  
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,



Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,  
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,"  
Said Lilia. "Why not now?" the maiden Aunt.  
"Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?  
A tale for summer as befits the time,  
And something it should be to suit the place,  
Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
Grave, solemn!"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd,  
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth  
An echo like a ghostly woodpecker  
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt  
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face  
With colour) turn'd to me with "As you will;  
Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamour'd he,  
"And make her some great Princess, six feet high,  
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"  
I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—  
Heroic seems our Princess as required.—  
But something made to suit with Time and place  
A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments,  
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all—  
This *were* a medley! we should have him back  
Who told the 'Winter's Tale' to do it for us.  
No matter; we will say whatever comes.



And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,  
And the rest follow'd : and the women sang  
Between the rougher voices of the men,  
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :  
And here I give the story and the songs.

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house,  
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt  
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,  
Dying, that none of all our blood should know  
The shadow from the substance, and that one  
Should come to fight with shadows, and to fall  
For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,  
An old and strange affection of the house.  
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what  
On a sudden, in the midst of men and day,  
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,  
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,  
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.  
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,  
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "catalepsy."  
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers ;  
My mother was as mild as any saint,  
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
So gracious was her tact and tenderness :  
But my good father thought a king a king ;  
He cared not for the affection of the house ;

He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands  
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass  
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,  
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd  
To one, a neighbouring Princess : she to me  
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf  
At eight years old ; and still from time to time  
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,  
And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;  
And still I wore her picture by my heart,  
And one dark tress ; and all around them both  
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,  
My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her : these brought back  
A present, a great labour of the loom ;  
And therewithal an answer vague as wind :  
Besides, they saw the king ; he took the gifts ;  
He said there was a compact ; that was true :  
But then she had a will—was he to blame ?—  
And maiden fancies ; loved to live alone  
Among her women ; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood  
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends :  
The first, a gentleman of broken means  
(His father's fault), but given to starts and bursts  
Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,  
And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face  
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
Inflamed with wrath : he started on his feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent



The wonder of the loom through warp and woof  
From skirt to skirt ; and at the last he sware  
That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
And bring her in a whirlwind : then he chew'd  
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,  
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. " My father, let me go.  
It cannot be but some gross error lies  
In this report, this answer of a king,  
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable :  
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,  
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,  
May rue the bargain made." And Florian said :  
" I have a sister at the foreign court,  
Who moves about the Princess ; she, you know,  
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence :  
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
The lady of three castles in that land :  
Through her this matter might be sifted clean."  
And Cyril whisper'd : " Take me with you too."  
Then laughing, " What, if these weird seizures come  
Upon you in those lands, and no one near  
To point you out the shadow from the truth ?  
Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ;  
I grate on rusty hinges here." But " No !"  
Roar'd the rough king, " you shall not ; we ourself  
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead  
In iron gauntlets : break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and pass'd  
Through the wild woods that hung about the town ;  
Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ;  
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed  
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees :  
What were those fancies ? wherefore break her troth ?  
Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated



A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks  
Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice  
Went with it, " Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month  
Became her golden shield, I stole from court  
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,  
Cat-footed through the town, and half in dread  
To hear my father's clamour at our backs  
With Ho ! from some bay-window shake the night ;  
But all was quiet : from the bastion'd walls  
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,  
And flying reach'd the frontier : then we crost  
To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and grange,  
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,  
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,  
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and small his voice,  
But bland the smile that, like a wrinkling wind  
On glassy water, drove his cheek in lines ;  
A little dry old man, without a star,  
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,  
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,  
And my betroth'd. " You do us, Prince," he said,  
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,  
" All honour. We remember love ourselves  
In our sweet youth : there did a compact pass  
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—  
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.  
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,  
With my full heart : but there were widows here,  
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;  
They fed her theories, in and out of place  
Maintaining that with equal husbandry  
The woman were an equal to the man.  
They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets rang ;

Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk ;  
Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot  
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,  
Was all in all ; they had but been, she thought,  
As children ; they must lose the child, assume  
The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,  
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of—  
But all she is and does is awful ; odes  
About this losing of the child,—and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics prophesying change,  
Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;  
And they that know such things—I sought but peace ;  
No critic I—would call them masterpieces :  
They master'd me. At last she begg'd a boon.  
A certain summer-palace which I have  
Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,  
Yet being an easy man, gave it ; and there,  
All wild to found an University  
For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more  
We know not,—only this : they see no men,  
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
Her brethren, though they love her, look upon her  
As on a kind of paragon ; and I  
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed  
Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since  
(And I confess with right) you think me bound  
In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;  
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance  
Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king ;

And I, though nettled that he seem'd to slur  
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
Our formal compact, yet not less (all frets  
But chafing me on fire to find my bride),  
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode  
Many a long league back to the North. At last  
From hills that look'd across a land of hope,



We dropt with evening on a rustic town  
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,  
Close at the boundary of the liberties ;  
There enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host  
To council, plied him with his richest wines,  
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He, with a long low sibilation, stared  
As blank as death in marble ; then exclaim'd  
Averring it was clear against all rules  
For any man to go : but as his brain  
Began to mellow, " If the king," he said,  
" Had given us letters, was he bound to speak ?  
The king would bear him out ; " and at the last—  
The summer of the vine in all his veins—  
" No doubt that we might make it worth his while.  
She once had pass'd that way ; he heard her speak  
She scared him—life ! he never saw the like ;  
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave :  
And he, he revered his liege-lady there ;  
He always made a point to post with mares ;  
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys ;  
The land, he understood, for miles about  
Was till'd by women ; all the swine were sows,  
And all the dogs——"

But while he jested thus,  
A thought flash'd through me which I clothed in act,  
Remembering how we three presented Maid,  
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,  
In masque or pageant at my father's court.  
We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;  
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake  
The midriff of despair with laughter, help  
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes  
We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe  
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,  
And boldly ventured on the liberties.



We follow'd up the river as we rode,  
And rode till midnight, when the college lights  
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
And linden alley ; then we pass'd an arch,  
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings  
From four-wing'd horses dark against the stars ;  
And some inscription ran along the front,  
But deep in shadow. Farther on we gain'd  
A little street half garden and half house ;  
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise  
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling  
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir  
Of fountains spouted up and showering down  
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :  
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,  
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,  
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like heaven and earth  
With constellation and with continent,  
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;  
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench  
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.  
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,  
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave  
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and this,  
And who were tutors. " Lady Blanche," she said,  
" And Lady Psyche." " Which was prettiest,  
Best natured ? " " Lady Psyche." " Hers are we,"  
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down and wrote,  
In such a hand as when a field of corn  
Bows all its ears before the roaring East :

" Three ladies of the Northern empire pray  
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,  
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
 And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes :  
 I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
 And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd  
 To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
 A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell  
 On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

## II.

As through the land at eve we went,  
 And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,  
 We fell out, my wife and I,  
 O we fell out I know not why,  
 And kiss'd again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child  
 We lost in other years,  
 There above the little grave,  
 O there above the little grave,  
 We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress came :  
 She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,  
 And zoned with gold ; and now when these were on,  
 And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,  
 She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know  
 The Princess Ida waited. Out we paced,  
 I first, and following through the porch that sang  
 All round with laurel, issued in a court  
 Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths  
 Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
 Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.  
 The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,  
 Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst ;  
 And here and there on lattice edges lay



Or book or lute ; but hastily we pass'd,  
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,  
All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant  
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
Than our man's earth : such eyes were in her head,  
And so much grace and power, breathing down  
From over her arch'd brows, with every turn  
Lived through her to the tips of her long hands,  
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

“ We give you welcome : not without redound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ? ”  
“ We of the court,” said Cyril. “ From the court,”  
She answer'd ; “ then ye know the Prince ? ” And he :  
“ The climax of his age ! as though there were  
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,  
He worships your ideal.” She replied :  
“ We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear  
This barren verbiage, current among men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.  
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem  
As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;  
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,  
We dream not of him : when we set our hand  
To this great work, we purposed with ourselves  
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks which make us toys of men, that so  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,



You may with those self-styled our lords ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale."

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,  
Perused the matting ; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these :  
Not for three years to correspond with home ;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;  
Not for three years to speak with any men ;  
And many more, which hastily subscribed,  
We enter'd on the boards : and " Now," she cried,  
" Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall !  
Our statues !—not of those that men desire,  
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose  
Convention, since to look on noble forms  
Makes noble through the sensuous organism  
That which is higher. O lift your natures up :  
Embrace our aims : work out your freedom. Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd :  
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us : you may go :  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;  
For they press in from all the provinces,  
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal : back again we crost the court

To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,  
 There sat along the forms, like morning doves  
 That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,  
 A patient range of pupils ; she herself  
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed  
 And on the hither side, or so she look'd,  
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,  
 In shining draperies, headed like a star,  
 Her maiden babe, a double April old,  
 Aglaïa slept. We sat : the Lady glanced :  
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame  
 That whisper'd " Asses' ears " among the sedge,  
 " My sister." " Comely, too, by all that's fair,"  
 Said Cyril. " O hush, hush ! " and she began.

" This world was once a fluid haze of light,  
 Till toward the centre set the starry tides,  
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast  
 The planets : then the monster, then the man ;  
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,  
 Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate ;  
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here  
 Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took  
 A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past ;  
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon  
 As emblematic of a nobler age ;  
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those  
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo ;  
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines  
 Of empire, and the woman's state in each,  
 How far from just ; till warming with her theme  
 She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique  
 And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet  
 With much contempt, and came to chivalry :  
 When some respect, however slight, was paid



To woman, superstition all awry :  
 However then commenced the dawn : a beam  
 Had slanted forward, falling in a land  
 Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,  
 Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared  
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert  
 None lordlier than themselves but that which made  
 Woman and man. She had founded ; they must build ;  
 Here might they learn whatever men were taught :  
 Let them not fear : some said their heads were less :  
 Some men's were small ; not they the least of men ;  
 For often fineness compensated size :  
 Besides, the brain was like the hand, and grew  
 With using ; thence the man's, if more was more ;  
 He took advantage of his strength to be  
 First in the field : some ages had been lost ;  
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life  
 Was longer ; and albeit their glorious names  
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth  
 The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,  
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,  
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so  
 With woman : and in arts of government  
 Elizabeth and others ; arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace  
 Sappho and others vied with any man :  
 And, last not least, she who had left her place,  
 And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow  
 To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight  
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy  
 Dilating on the future : " Everywhere  
 Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,



Two in the tangled business of the world,  
Two in the liberal offices of life,  
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss  
Of science, and the secrets of the mind :  
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :  
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth  
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,  
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us : the rest  
Parted ; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she  
Began to address us, and was moving on  
In gratulation, till as when a boat  
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice  
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,  
" My brother ! " " Well, my sister. " " Oh," she said  
" What do you here ? and in this dress ? and these ?  
Why, who are these ? a wolf within the fold !  
A pack of wolves ! the Lord be gracious to me !  
A plot, a plot, a plot to ruin all ! "  
" No plot, no plot," he answer'd. " Wretched boy,  
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,  
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH ? "  
" And if I had," he answer'd, " who could think  
The softer Adams of your Academe,  
O sister, Sirens though they be, were such  
As chanted on the blanching bones of men ? "  
" But you will find it otherwise," she said.  
" You jest : ill jesting with edge-tools ! my vow  
Binds me to speak, and oh, that iron will,  
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,  
The Princess. " " Well then, Psyche, take my life  
And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
For warning : bury me beside the gate,  
And cut this epitaph above my bones :  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,  
All for the common good of womankind.* "

“Let me die too,” said Cyril, “having seen  
And heard the Lady Psyche.”

I struck in :

“Albeit so mask’d, Madam, I love the truth ;  
Receive it, and in me behold the Prince  
Your countryman, affianced years ago  
To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,  
And thus (what other way was left) I came.”

“O Sir, O Prince, I have no country—none ;  
If any, this ; but none. Whate’er I was  
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.

Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe  
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,  
Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt  
Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls.”

“Yet pause,” I said : “for that inscription there  
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
To scare the fowl from fruit : if more there be,  
If more and acted on, what follows? war :  
Your own work marr’d ; for this your Academe  
Whichever side be victor, in the halloo  
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
With all fair theories only made to gild  
A stormless summer.” “Let the Princess judge  
Of that,” she said : “farewell, Sir—and to you.  
I shudder at the sequel, but I go.”

“Are you that Lady Psyche,” I rejoin’d,  
“The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
Yet hangs his portrait in my father’s hall  
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,  
And all else fled? we point to it, and we say  
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
But branches current yet in kindred veins.”



‘Are you that Psyche,’ Florian added, ‘she  
With whom I sang about the morning hills,  
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,  
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you  
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,  
To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught  
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you  
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?’  
‘You are that Psyche,’ Cyril said, ‘for whom  
I would be that for ever which I seem,  
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
And glean your scatter’d sapience.’

Then once more,

‘Are you that Lady Psyche,’ I began,  
‘That on her bridal morn before she pass’d  
From ail her old companions, when the king  
Kiss’d her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties  
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;  
That were there any of our people there  
In want or peril, there was one to hear  
And help them? look! for such are these and I.’  
‘Are you that Psyche,’ Florian ask’d, ‘to whom,  
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
And sobb’d, and you sobb’d with it, and the blood  
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.  
That was fawn’s blood, not brother’s, yet you wept.  
Oh by the bright head of my little niece,  
You were that Psyche, and what are you now?’  
‘You are that Psyche,’ Cyril said again,  
‘The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
That ever crow’d for kisses.’

“Out upon it!”

She answer’d, “peace! and why should I not play



The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
 Him you call great : he for the common weal.  
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
 As I might slay this child, if good need were.  
 Slew both his sons : and I, shall I, on whom  
 The secular emancipation turns  
 Of half this world, be swerved from right to save  
 A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.  
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.  
 Oh hard, when love and duty clash ! I fear  
 My conscience will not count me fleckless ; yet—  
 Hear my conditions : promise (otherwise  
 You perish) as you came, to slip away  
 To-day, to-morrow, soon : it shall be said,  
 These women were too barbarous, would not learn :  
 They fled, who might have shamed us : promise, all."

What could we else, we promised each ; and she,  
 Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced  
 A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
 By Florian ; holding out her lily arms  
 Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said :  
 " I knew you at the first : though you have grown  
 You scarce have alter'd : I am sad and glad  
 To see you, Florian. *I* give thee to death,  
 My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.  
 My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.  
 Our mother, is she well ? "

With that she kiss'd  
 His forehead ; then, a moment after, clung  
 About him ; and betwixt them blossom'd up  
 From out a common vein of memory  
 Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,  
 And far allusion, till the gracious dews  
 Began to glisten and to fall : and while  
 They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,

"I brought a message here from Lady Blanche."  
 Back started she, and turning round we saw  
 The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,  
 Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown  
 That clad her like an April daffodilly  
 (Her mother's colour), with her lips apart,  
 And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,  
 As bottom agates seen to wave and float  
 In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.  
 Then Lady Psyche, "Ah—Melissa—you!  
 You heard us?" and Melissa, "O pardon me!  
 I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:  
 But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,  
 Nor think I bear that heart within my breast  
 To give three gallant gentlemen to death."  
 "I trust you," said the other, "for we two  
 Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine:  
 But let your mother's jealous temperament—  
 Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove  
 The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear  
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
 My honour, these their lives." "Ah, fear me not,"  
 Replied Melissa; "no—I would not tell.  
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
 No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things  
 That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."  
 "Be it so," the other, "that we still may lead  
 The new light up, and culminate in peace,  
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."  
 Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest man  
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you  
 (Though, Madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask)  
 Less welcome find among us, if you came



Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
Myself for something more." He said not what,  
But "Thanks," she answer'd, "go : we have been too long  
Together : keep your hoods about the face ;  
They do so that affect abstraction here.  
Speak little ; mix not with the rest ; and hold  
Your promise : all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,  
And held her round the knees against his waist,  
And blew the swell'd cheek of a trumpeter,  
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child  
Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd :  
And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd

For half the day through stately theatres  
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard  
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate  
The circle rounded under female hands  
With flawless demonstration : follow'd then  
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
With scraps of thund'rous Epic lilted out  
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long  
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time  
Sparkle for ever : then we dipt in all  
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
The morals, something of the frame, the rock.  
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,  
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
And whatsoever can be taught and known ;  
Till like three horses that have broken fence,  
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn.  
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke :  
"Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."  
"They hunt old trails," said Cyril, "very well ;



But when did woman ever yet invent?"

"Ungracious!" answer'd Florian, "have you learnt  
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd  
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?"

"Oh, trash," he said, "but with a kernel in it.  
Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?  
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,  
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,  
And every Muse tumbled a science in.

A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,  
And round these halls a thousand baby loves  
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,  
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but oh  
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,  
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,  
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;  
He cleft me through the stomacher; and now  
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase  
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?  
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I  
Flatter myself that always everywhere  
I know the substance when I see it. Well,  
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she  
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,  
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?  
For dear are those three castles to my wants,  
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
And two dear things are one of double worth,  
And much I might have said, but that my zone  
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! Oh to hear  
The Doctors! Oh to watch the thirsty plants  
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,  
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou,  
Modulate me. Soul of mincing mimicry!  
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;  
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet

Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;  
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose  
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,  
Where they like swallows coming out of time  
Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell  
For dinner, let us go ! "

And in we stream'd  
Among the columns, pacing staid and still  
By twos and threes, till all from end to end  
With beauties every shade of brown and fair,  
In colours gayer than the morning mist,  
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.  
How might a man not wander from his wits  
Pierced through with eyes, but that I kept mine own  
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,  
The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
Sat compass'd with professors : they, the while  
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro :  
A clamour thicken'd, mix'd with inmost terms  
Of art and science : Lady Blanche alone  
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,  
With all her Autumn tresses falsely brown,  
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace  
Concluded, and we sought the gardens : there  
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one  
In this hand held a volume as to read,  
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that :  
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,  
Or under arches of the marble bridge  
Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some hid and sought  
In the orange thickets : others toss'd a ball  
Above the fountain-jets, and back again  
With laughter : others lay about the lawns,  
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May  
Was passing : what was learning unto them ?



They wish'd to marry ; they could rule a house ;  
 Men hated learnèd women : but we three  
 Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often came  
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
 That harm'd not : then day droop'd ; the chapel bells  
 Call'd us : we left the walks ; we mix'd with those  
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,  
 Before two streams of light from wall to wall,  
 While the great organ almost burst his pipes,  
 Groaning for power, and rolling through the court  
 A long melodious thunder to the sound  
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
 The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven  
 A blessing on her labours for the world.

## III.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
     Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
     Wind of the western sea !  
 Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
     Blow him again to me ;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
     Father will come to thee soon ;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
     Father will come to thee soon ;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
     Under the silvery moon :  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

MORN in the white wake of the morning star  
 Came furrowing all the orient into gold.  
 We rose, and each by other dress'd with care  
 Descended to the court that lay three parts



In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd  
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd,  
Or seem'd to watch, the dancing bubble, approach'd  
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,  
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes  
The circled Iris of a night of tears ;  
" And fly," she cried, " O fly, while yet you may.  
My mother knows : " and when I asked her, " how,"  
" My fault," she wept, " my fault ! and yet not mine ;  
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.  
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night  
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
She says the Princess should have been the Head,  
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;  
And so it was agreed when first they came :  
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,  
And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;  
Hers more than half the students, all the love  
And so last night *she* fell to canvass you :  
*Her* countrywomen ! she did not envy her.  
' Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?  
Girls ?—more like men ! ' and at these words the snake,  
My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast ;  
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek  
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye  
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd :  
' O marvellously modest maiden, you !  
Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men  
You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus  
For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am shamed  
That I must needs repeat for my excuse  
What looks so little graceful : ' men ' (for still  
My mother went revolving on the word),  
' And so they are—very like men indeed—  
And with that woman closeted for hours !'

Then came these dreadful words out one by one,  
'Why—these—*are*—men:' I shudder'd: 'and you know it.'  
'O ask me nothing,' I said. 'And she knows too  
And she conceals it.' So my mother clutch'd  
The truth at once, but with no word from me;  
And now thus early risen she goes to inform  
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd;  
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:  
But heal me with your pardon ere you go."  
"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?"  
Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again: than wear  
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.  
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in heaven,"  
He added, "lest some classic Angel speak  
In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Ganymedes,  
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'  
But I will melt this marble into wax  
To yield us further furlough:" and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought  
He scarce would prosper. "Tell us," Florian ask'd,  
"How grew this feud betwixt the right and left."  
"Oh, long ago," she said, "betwixt these two  
Division smoulders hidden: 'tis my mother,  
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:  
I never knew my father, but she says  
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool;  
And still she rail'd against the state of things.  
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.  
But when your sister came she won the heart  
Of Ida: they were still together, grew  
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;  
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;  
One mind in all things: yet my mother still  
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,



And angled with them for her pupil's love :  
She calls her plagiarist ; I know not what :  
But I must go : I dare not tarry," and light  
As flies the shadow of a bird she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing after her :  
" An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.  
If I could love, why this were she : how pretty  
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,  
As if to close with Cyril's random wish :  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

" The crane," I said, " may chatter of the crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
My princess, O my princess ! true she errs,  
But in her own grand way : being herself  
Three times more noble than threescore of men,  
She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a crown  
To blind the truth and me : for her, and her,  
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix  
The nectar ; but—ah she—whene'er she moves  
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks  
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying, from the court we paced, and gain'd  
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,  
And leaning there on those balusters, high  
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale  
That, blown about the foliage underneath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came  
Cyril, and yawning, " Oh, hard task," he cried ;  
" No fighting shadows here ! I forced a way  
Through solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.



Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump  
A league of street in summer solstice down,  
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.  
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found her there  
At point to move, and settled in her eyes  
The green malignant light of coming storm.  
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,  
As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek I pray'd  
Concealment : she demanded who we were,  
And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair,  
But, your example pilot, told her all.  
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.  
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,  
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.  
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,  
And our three lives. True—we had limed ourselves  
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.  
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm  
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she said,  
'So puddled as it is with favouritism.'  
I tried the mother's heart : shame might befall  
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew.  
Her answer was, 'Leave me to deal with that.'  
I spoke of war to come and many deaths ;  
And she replied, her duty was to speak,  
And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew  
No rock so hard but that a little wave  
May beat admission in a thousand years,  
I recommenced : 'Decide not ere you pause.  
I find you here but in the second place,  
Some say the third—the authentic foundress you.  
I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :  
Wink at our advent : help my prince to gain  
His rightful bride, and here I promise you  
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign  
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,

And your great name flow on with broadening time  
For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,  
And told me she would answer us to-day ;  
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head :  
" That afternoon the Princess rode to take  
The dip of certain strata to the North.  
Would we go with her ? we should find the land  
Worth seeing ; and the river made a fall  
Out yonder : " then she pointed on to where  
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks  
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on through all  
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.  
Then summon'd to the porch, we went. She stood  
Among her maidens, higher by the head,  
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one  
Of those tame leopards—kittenlike he roll'd  
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near ;  
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came  
Upon me, the weird vision of our house :  
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,  
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
Her college and her maidens empty masks,  
And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt  
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe ;  
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh  
Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes  
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook  
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
Went forth in long retinue following up  
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her, and to me she said :  
" O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not



Too harsh to your companion yestermorn ;  
Unwillingly we spake." "No—not to her,"  
I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake  
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say."  
"Again?" she cried; "are you ambassadors  
From him to me? we give you, being strange,  
A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him—could have wish'd—  
"Our king expects—was there no pre-contract?—  
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem  
All he prefigured, and he could not see  
The bird of passage flying south but long'd  
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep  
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,  
Or baser courses, children of despair."

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not read—no books?  
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in that  
Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourselves have been:  
We had our dreams; perhaps he mix'd with them:  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,  
Being other—since we learnt our meaning here,  
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man."

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile,  
"And as to pre-contracts, we move, my friend,  
At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,  
O Vashti, noble Vashti! summon'd out  
She kept her state, and left the drunken king  
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms."

"Alas, your Highness breathes full East," I said,  
"On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,



I prize his truth : and then how vast a work  
 To assail this gray preëminence of man !  
 You grant me license ; might I use it ? think,  
 Ere half be done perchance your life may fail ;  
 Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,  
 And takes and ruins all ; and thus your pains  
 May only make that footprint upon sand  
 Which old-recurring waves of prejudice  
 Resmooth to nothing : might I dread that you,  
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds  
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,  
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,  
 Love, children, happiness ? ”

And she exclaim'd,

“ Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild !  
 What ! though your Prince's love were like a God's,  
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice ?  
 You are bold indeed : we are not talk'd to thus.  
 Yet will we say for children, would they grew  
 Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well :  
 But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,  
 Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die :  
 They with the sun and moon renew their light  
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.  
 Children—that men may pluck them from our hearts,  
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—  
 Oh—children—there is nothing upon earth  
 More miserable than she that has a son  
 And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;  
 Though she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,  
 Who learns the one POU STO whence after-hands  
 May move the world, though she herself effect  
 But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of giants living, each, a thousand years,

That we might see our own work out, and watch  
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself  
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand  
Imaginations might at all be won.  
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts :

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you :  
We are used to that ; for women, up till this  
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,  
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess  
How much their welfare is a passion to us.  
If we could give them surer, quicker proof—  
Oh, if our end were less achievable  
By slow approaches, than by single act  
Of immolation, any phase of death,  
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes  
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd, as if to veil a noble tear ;  
And up we came to where the river sloped  
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks  
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,  
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck out  
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd  
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,  
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her  
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I ask'd,  
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,  
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you love  
The metaphysics ! read, and earn our prize,  
A golden brooch : beneath an emerald plane  
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to the life :  
She rapt upon her subject, he on her :



For there are schools for all." "And yet," I said,  
"Methinks I have not found among them all  
One anatomic." "Nay we thought of that,"  
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not: in truth  
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape  
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound.  
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,  
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,  
Encarnalise their spirits: yet we know  
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:  
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,  
For many weary moons before we came,  
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself  
Would tend upon you. To your question now,  
Which touches on the workman and his work.  
Let there be light, and there was light: 'tis so:  
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;  
And all creation is one act at once,  
The birth of light: but we that are not all,  
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,  
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make  
One act a phantom of succession: thus  
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time;  
But in the shadow will we work, and mould  
The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,  
And o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came  
On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
Full of all beauty. "Oh, how sweet," I said  
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask),  
"To linger here with one that loved us." "Yea,"  
She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies  
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields



Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns  
 Where paced the demigods of old, and saw  
 The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers  
 Built to the Sun: " then, turning to her maids,  
 " Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;  
 Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph : here she stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,  
 The woman-conqueror ; woman-conquer'd there  
 The bearded victor of ten-thousand hymns,  
 And all the men mourn'd at his side. But we  
 Set forth to climb ; then climbing, Cyril kept  
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced. Many a little hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel set  
 In the dark crag : and then we turn'd, we wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
 Grew broader toward his death, and fell, and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

## IV.

The splendour falls on castle walls  
 And snowy summits old in story ;  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,  
 And thinner, clearer, farther going !  
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar  
 The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !  
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :  
 Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

## THE PRINCESS.

O love, they die in yon rich sky ;  
 They faint on hill or field or river :  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
 And grow for ever and for ever.  
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying  
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

“ THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,  
 It that hypothesis of theirs be sound,”  
 Said Ida ; “ let us down and rest : ” and we  
 Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,  
 By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,  
 Dropt through the ambrosial gloom to where below  
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent  
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,  
 Descending ; once or twice she lent her hand,  
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,  
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt  
 Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,  
 There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank  
 Our elbows : on a tripod in the midst  
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd  
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, “ Let some one sing to us : lightlier move  
 The minutes fledged with music : ” and a maid,  
 Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang .—

“ Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,  
 Tears from the depth of some divine despair  
 Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,  
 In looking on the happy Autumn fields,  
 And thinking of the days that are no more.

“ Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
 That brings our friends up from the underworld,  
 Sad as the last which reddens over one  
 That sinks with all we love below the verge ;  
 So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.



“ Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns  
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds  
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes  
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;  
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

“ Dear as remember'd kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd  
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.”

She ended with such passion that the tear  
She sang of shook and fell, an erring pearl  
Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain  
Answer'd the Princess, “ If indeed there haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool  
And so pace by : but thine are fancies hatch'd  
In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,  
While down the streams that float us each and all  
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste  
Becomes a cloud : for all things serve their time  
Toward that great year of equal might and rights,  
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end  
Found golden : let the past be past ; let be  
Their cancell'd Babels : though the rough kex break  
The starr'd mosaic, and the wild goat hang  
Upon the shaft, and the wild fig-tree split  
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear  
A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns  
Above the unrisen morrow : ” then to me,  
“ Know you no song of your own land ? ” she said,  
“ Not such as moans about the retrospect.



But deals with the other distance and the hues  
Of promise ; not a death's-head at the wine."

Then I remember'd one myself had made  
What time I watch'd the swallow winging south  
From mine own land, part made long since, and part  
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far  
As I could ape their treble, did I sing : —

" O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,  
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,  
And tell her, tell her what I tell to thee.

" O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,  
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,  
And dark and true and tender is the North.

" O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light  
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,  
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

" O were I thou that she might take me in,  
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart  
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

" Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,  
Delaying as the tender ash delays  
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green ?

" O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :  
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

" O tell her, brief is life but love is long,  
And brief the sun of summer in the North,  
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

" O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,  
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,  
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee."

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,  
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,  
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,  
And knew not what they meant ; for still my voice

Rang false : but smiling, "Not for thee," she said,  
"O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather, maid,  
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake  
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and this  
A mere love-poem ! Oh, for such, my friend,  
We hold them slight : they mind us of the time  
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,  
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,  
And dress the victim to the offering up,  
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,  
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honour once ;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,  
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her ! she is dead.  
So they blaspheme the Muse ! but great is song  
Used to great ends : ourself have often tried  
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd  
The passion of the prophetess ; for song  
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit than to junketing and love.  
Love is it ? Would this same mock-love, and this  
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,  
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,  
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered  
Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough !  
But now to leaven play with profit, you,  
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,  
That gives the manners of your countrywomen ?"

She spoke, and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes  
Of shining expectation fix'd on mine.  
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,  
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,  
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began



To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch  
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences  
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,  
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;  
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows.  
"Forbear," the Princess cried. "Forbear, Sir," I;  
And heated through and through with wrath and love  
I smote him on the breast. He started up;  
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd.  
Melissa clamour'd, "Flee the death!" "To horse,"  
Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and fled, as flies  
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,  
When some one batters at the dovecote-doors,  
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vex'd at heart,  
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes  
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoot,  
And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,  
"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!"  
For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd  
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:  
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch  
Rapt to the horrible fall. A glance I gave,  
No more, but woman-vested as I was  
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then  
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left  
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,  
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
Was half-disrooted from his place, and stoop'd  
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave  
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,  
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd  
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew  
My burthen from mine arms; they cried, "She lives!"



They bore her back into the tent : but I,  
 So much a kind of shame within me wrought,  
 Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,  
 Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone on foot  
 (For since her horse was lost, I left her mine)  
 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft  
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length  
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art  
 And Science, caryatids, lifted up  
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves  
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued  
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows  
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon  
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,  
 Through which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,  
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,  
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,  
 Now poring on the glow-worm, now the star,  
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd  
 Through a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
 Than female, moving through the uncertain gloom,  
 Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she ;"  
 But it was Florian. "Hist, oh hist," he said,  
 "They seek us : out so late is out of rules.  
 Moreover, 'Seize the strangers,' is the cry.  
 How came you here?" I told him. "I," said he,  
 "Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.  
 Arriving all confused among the rest  
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,  
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath  
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial : each

Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of all  
Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first  
Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :  
And then, demanded if her mother knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied :  
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there ; she call'd  
For Psyche's child, to cast it from the doors ;  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face :  
And I slipt out. But whither will you now ?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled.  
What if together ? that were not so well.  
Would rather we had never come ! I dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I  
That struck him : this is proper to the clown,  
Though smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown  
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame  
That which he says he loves : for Cyril, howe'er  
He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song  
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips  
Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold  
These flashes on the surface are not he.  
He has a solid base of temperament :  
But as the water-lily starts and slides  
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,  
Though anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near  
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, "Names'"  
He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but I began  
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind  
And double in and out the boles, and race  
By all the fountains : fleet I was of foot :



Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ; behind  
I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at mine ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.  
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That clasp'd the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat  
High in the hall : above her droop'd a lamp,  
And made the single jewel on her brow  
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,  
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each side  
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair  
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood  
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,  
Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,  
And labour. Each was like a Druid rock ;  
Or like a spire of land that stands apart  
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove  
An advent to the throne ; and therebeside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay  
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,  
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,  
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

“ It was not thus, O Princess, in old days :  
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :  
I led you then to all the Castalies ;  
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me  
Your second mother : those were gracious times.



Then came your new friend : you began to change—  
I saw it, and grieved—to slacken and to cool ;  
Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,  
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you back,  
And partly conscious of my own deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil head,  
And chiefly you were born for something great  
In which I might your fellow-worker be,  
When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme  
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown ;  
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,  
Up in one night and due to sudden sun :  
We took this palace ; but even from the first  
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.  
What student came but that you planed her path  
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,  
I your old friend and tried, she new in all ?  
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean ;  
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known.  
Then came these wolves : *they* knew her : *they* endured,  
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,  
To tell her what they were, and she to hear :  
And me none told : not less to an eye like mine,  
A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
Last night their mask was patent, and my foot  
Was to you : but I thought again : I fear'd  
To meet a cold ' We thank you, we shall hear of it  
From Lady Psyche : ' you had gone to her,  
She told, perforce ; and winning easy grace,  
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us  
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem  
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat  
Were all miscounted as malignant haste

To push my rival out of place and power.  
But public use required she should be known ;  
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,  
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.  
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,  
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;  
And yet this day (though you should hate me for it)  
I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,  
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,  
That surely she will speak ; if not, then I :  
Did she ? These monsters blazon'd what they were,  
According to the coarseness of their kind,  
For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)  
And full of cowardice and guilty shame—  
I grant in her some sense of shame—she flies ;  
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,  
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,  
I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,  
And talents, I—you know it—I will not boast :  
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff  
For every gust of chance, and men will say  
We did not know the real light, but chased  
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased : the Princess answer'd coldly, " Good :  
Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.  
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)  
Our mind is changed : we take it to ourselves."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,  
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.  
" The plan was mine. I built the nest," she said,  
" To hatch the cuckoo. Rise ! " and stoop'd to updrag  
Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast  
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer.



Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,  
A Niobeän daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ; and while  
We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd  
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,  
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear  
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd  
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell  
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head  
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood  
Tore open ; silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over brow  
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom  
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,  
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick  
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens :  
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,  
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,  
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard  
In the dead hush the papers that she held  
Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet  
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;  
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ; she crush'd  
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn  
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,  
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say  
" Read," and I read—two letters—one her sire's.

" Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way  
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,  
We, conscious of what temper you are built,  
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell  
Into his father's hands, who has this night,  
You lying close upon his territory,  
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."



The second was my father's, running thus :  
" You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :  
Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :  
Cleave to your contract : though indeed we hear  
You hold the woman is the better man ;  
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread  
Would make all women kick against their Lords  
Through all the world, and which might well deserve  
That we this night should pluck your palace down ;  
And we will do it, unless you send us back  
Our son, on the instant whole."

So far I read ;

And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

" Oh, not to pry and peer on your reserve,  
But led by golden wishes, and a hope  
The child of regal compact, did I break  
Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex  
But venerator, zealous it should be  
All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,  
Though man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,  
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life  
Less mine than yours : my nurse would tell me of you ;  
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,  
Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stoop'd to me  
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,  
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south  
And blown to inmost north ; at eve and dawn  
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;  
The leader wild-swan in among the stars  
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glow-worm light  
The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,  
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been  
Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the enthroned  
Persephone in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,  
A man I came to see you : but, indeed,

Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,  
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait  
 On you, their centre : let me say but this,  
 That many a famous man and woman, town  
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen  
 The dwarfs of presage ; though when known, there grew  
 Another kind of beauty in detail  
 Made them worth knowing ; but in you I found  
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down  
 And master'd, while that after-beauty makes  
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour  
 Within me, that except you slay me here,  
 According to your bitter statute-book,  
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say  
 The seal does music ; who desire you more  
 Than growing boys their manhood ; dying lips,  
 With many thousand matters left to do,  
 The breath of life ; oh, more than poor men wealth,  
 Than sick men health--yours, yours, not mine—but half  
 Without you, with you, whole ; and of those halves  
 You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar  
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold  
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,  
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms  
 To follow up the worthiest till he die :  
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized  
 Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd  
 Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce  
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,  
 As waits a river level with the dam  
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :  
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose  
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together ; from the illumin'd hall  
 Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press



Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,  
And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro  
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,  
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
Some crying there was an army in the land,  
And some that men were in the very walls,  
And some they cared not ; till a clamour grew  
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built  
And worse-confounded : high above them stood  
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head : but rising up  
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so  
To the open window moved, remaining there  
Fix'd like a beacon-tower above the waves  
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye  
Glares ruin, and the wild-birds on the light  
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd  
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell.

“ What fear ye, brawlers ? am not I your Head ?  
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : *I* dare  
All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear ?  
Peace ! there are those to avenge us, and they come :  
If not—myself were like enough, O girls,  
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
Die : yet I blame ye not so much for fear ;  
Six thousand years of fear have made ye that  
From which I would redeem ye : but for those  
That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know  
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow morn  
We hold a great convention : then shall they  
That love their voices more than duty, learn  
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live  
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,



Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,  
 Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,  
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,  
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,  
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat the crowd,  
 Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile, that look'd  
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom  
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said :

" You have done well and like a gentleman,  
 And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :  
 And you look well too in your woman's dress :  
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
 You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks :  
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood—  
 Then men had said—but now—What hinders me  
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—  
 Yet since our father—Wasps in our good hive,  
 You would-be quenchers of the light to be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—  
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour !  
 You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us—  
*I* wed with thee ! *I* bound by pre-contract  
 Your bride, your bondslave ! not though all the gold  
 That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,  
 And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,  
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us :  
 I trample on your offers and on you :  
 Begone : we will not look upon you more.—  
 Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough

Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd  
Their motion : twice I sought to plead my cause,  
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,  
The weight of destiny : so from her face  
They push'd us, down the steps, and through the court,  
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street, and gain'd a petty mound  
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard  
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came  
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt :  
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts ;  
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,  
The jest and earnest working side by side,  
The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
Were shadows ; and the long fantastic night  
With all its doings had and had not been,  
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits  
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;  
Not long ; I shook it off, for spite of doubts  
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one  
To whom the touch of all mischance but came  
As night to him that, sitting on a hill,  
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun,  
Set into sunrise : then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums,  
That beat to battle where he stands ;  
Thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands :  
A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
He sees his brood about thy knee ;  
The next—like fire he meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee !

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-possess'd,  
She struck such warbling fury through the words :



And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd  
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—  
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change  
 The music—clapp'd her hands and cried for war,  
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an end.  
 And he that next inherited the tale  
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
 "Sir Ralph has got your colours : if I prove  
 Your knight and fight your battle, what for me?"  
 It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb  
 Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
 She took it and she flung it. "Fight," she said,  
 "And make us all we would be, great and good."  
 He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
 Arranged the favour, and assumed the Prince.

## V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,  
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
 And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace," I.  
 "The second two : they wait," he said, "pass on ;  
 His Highness wakes : " and one, that clash'd in arms,  
 By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led  
 Threading the soldier-city, till we heard  
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake  
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent  
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light  
 Dazed me half-blind : I stood and seem'd to hear,  
 As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes  
 A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,  
 Each hissing in his neighbour's ear ; and then  
 A strangled titter, out of which there brake  
 On all sides, clamouring etiquette to death,  
 Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two old kings  
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,



The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,  
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,  
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,  
Panted from weary sides, "King, you are free!  
We did but keep you surety for our son,  
If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,  
That tends her bristled grunterns in the sludge:"  
For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers  
More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,  
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel:  
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm  
A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,  
He has been among his shadows." "Satan take  
The old women and their shadows! (thus the King  
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.  
Go: Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink  
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,  
Away we stole, and transient in a trice  
From what was left of faded woman-slough  
To sheathing splendours and the golden scale  
Of harness, issued in the sun that now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,  
And hit the northern hills. Here Cyril met us,  
A little shy at first, but by and by  
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given  
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon  
Followed his tale. Amazed he fled away  
Through the dark land, and later in the night  
Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we fell  
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,  
But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent  
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there,  
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,

Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,  
And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,  
All her fair length upon the ground she lay ;  
And at her head a follower of the camp,  
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,  
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come" he whispered to her  
"Lift up your head, sweet sister ; lie not thus.  
What have you done but right ? you could not slay  
Me, nor your prince : look up : be comforted :  
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,  
When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise I :  
"Be comforted : have I not lost her too,  
In whose least act abides the nameless charm  
That none has else for me ?" She heard, she moved,  
She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up she sat,  
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth  
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death  
In deathless marble. "Her," she said, "my friend—  
Parted from her—betray'd her cause and mine—  
Where shall I breathe ? why kept ye not your faith ?  
O base and bad ! what comfort ? none for me !"  
To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray  
Take comfort : live, dear lady, for your child !"  
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah my child,  
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more !  
For now will cruel Ida keep her back ;  
And either she will die from want of care,  
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
The child is hers—for every little fault,  
The child is hers ; and they will beat my girl,  
Remembering her mother : O my flower !  
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,



And she will pass me by in after-life  
 With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.  
 Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
 To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,  
 The horror of the shame among them all :  
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
 And make a wild petition night and day,  
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
 Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
 My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child :  
 And I will take her up and go my way,  
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her.  
 Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me  
 Who gave me back my child ?" " Be comforted,"  
 Said Cyril, " you shall have it : " but again  
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so  
 Like tender things that being caught feign death,  
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran  
 Through all the camp, and inward raced the scouts  
 With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and without  
 Found the gray kings at parle : and " Look you," cried  
 My father, " that our compact be fulfill'd.  
 You have spoilt this child : she laughs at you and man :  
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him.  
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire ;  
 She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me :  
 " We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time  
 With our strange girl : and yet they say that still  
 You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large :  
 How say you, war or not ? "

" Not war, if possible,  
 O king," I said, " lest from the abuse of war,  
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,



The smouldering homestead, and the household flower  
 Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—  
 A smoke go up through which I loom to her  
 Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn  
 At him that mars her plan ; but then would hate  
 (And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,  
 And every face she look'd on justify it)  
 The general foe. More soluble is this knot  
 By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
 What were I nigher this although we dash'd  
 Your cities into shards with catapults?  
 She would not love ;—or brought her chained, a slave,  
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
 Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my little chance  
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs,  
 And crush'd to death : and rather, Sire, than this  
 I would the old God of war himself were dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,  
 Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake

My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.  
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!  
 Man is the hunter, woman is his game.  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;  
 They love us for it, and we ride them down :  
 Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for shame !  
 Boy, there's no rose that's nalf so dear to them  
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in  
 Among the women, snares them by the score  
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, though dashed with death

He reddens what he kisses : thus I won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,  
 Worth winning. But this firebrand—gentleness  
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it."

" Yea, but, Sire," I cried,  
 " Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No.  
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize  
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose  
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes  
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down  
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,  
 No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, king,  
 True woman : but you clash them all in one,  
 That have as many differences as we.  
 The violet varies from the lily as far  
 As oak from elm : one loves the soldier, one  
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,  
 And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,  
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
 Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they need  
 More breadth of culture : is not Ida right?  
 They worth it? truer to the law within?  
 Severer in the logic of a life?  
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences  
 Of Earth and Heaven? and she of whom you speak  
 My mother, looks as whole as some serene  
 Creation minted in the golden moods  
 Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,  
 But pure as lines of green that streak the white  
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say,  
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
 Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,  
 But whole and one : and take them all in all,  
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,



As truthful, much that Ida claims as right  
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs  
 As dues of Nature. To our point : not war ;  
 Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"  
 Said Gama. "We remember love ourself  
 In our sweet youth ; we did not rate him then  
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.  
 You talk almost like Ida : *she* can talk ;  
 And there is something in it as you say :  
 But you talk kindlier : we esteem you for it.—  
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,  
 I would he had our daughter : for the rest  
 Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,  
 Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—  
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—  
 We pardon it ; and for your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,  
 You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,  
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,  
 Nor robbed the farmer of his bowl of cream :  
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,  
 And speak with Arac : Arac's word is thrice  
 As ours with Ida : something may be done—  
 I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.—  
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,  
 Follow us : who knows ? we four may build some plan  
 Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd  
 White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd  
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,  
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns  
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring



In every bole, a song on every spray  
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke  
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed  
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode ;  
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dew  
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air  
On our mail'd heads. But other thoughts than Peace  
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,  
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers  
With clamour : for among them rose a cry  
As if to greet the king ; they made a halt ;  
The horses yell'd ; they clash'd their arms ; the drum  
Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife ;  
And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
The banner. Anon to meet us lightly pranced  
Three captains out ; nor ever had I seen  
Such thews of men : the midmost and the highest  
Was Arac : all about his motion clung  
The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
Of the east, that play'd upon them, made them glance  
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,  
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark ;  
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard  
War-music, felt the blind wild beast of force,  
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
Stir in me as to strike. Then took the king  
His three broad sons ; with now a wandering hand  
And now a pointed finger, told them all.  
A common light of smiles at our disguise  
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest  
Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,

The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words :

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself  
Your captive ; yet my father wills not war :  
And, 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?  
But then this question of your troth remains :  
And there's a downright honest meaning in her :  
She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet  
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme ;  
She prest and prest it on me—I myself,  
What know I of these things ? but, life and soul !  
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs.  
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?  
I take her for the flower of womankind,  
And so I often told her, right or wrong ;  
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,  
And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,  
I stand upon her side : she made me swear it—  
Life—and with solemn rites by candlelight—  
Swear by St. something—I forget her name—  
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men—  
*She* was a princess too—and so I swore.  
Come, this is all ; she will not : waive your claim :  
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once  
Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will.”

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up  
My pre-contract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;  
Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat, “Like to like !  
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.”  
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow !  
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point



Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,  
“Decide it here : why not? we are three to three.”

Then spake the third, “But three to three? no more?  
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?  
More, more, for honour : every captain waits  
Hungry for honour, angry for his king.  
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each  
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow  
Of these or those, the question settled die.”

“Yea,” answered I, “for this wild wreath of air,  
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
Foam of men's deeds—this honour, if ye will.  
It needs must be for honour if at all :  
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,  
And if we win, we fail : she would not keep  
Her compact.” “’Sdeath! but we will send to her,”  
Said Arac, “worthy reasons why she should  
Bide by this issue : let our missive through,  
And you shall have her answer by the word.”

“Boys!” shriek'd the old king, but vainlier than a hen  
To her false daughters in the pool, for none  
Regarded ; neither seem'd there more to say.  
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found  
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates  
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,  
Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
With her own people's life : three times he went :  
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd :  
He batter'd at the doors : none came : the next,  
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence :  
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough  
Came sallying through the gates, and caught his hair,  
And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek  
They made him wild : not less one glance he caught



Through open doors of Ida station'd there  
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm  
Though compass'd by two armies and the noise  
Of arms ; and standing like a stately pine  
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
When storm is on the heights, and right and left  
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll  
The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and yet her will  
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged  
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd  
His iron palms together with a cry ;  
Himself would tilt it out among the lads :  
But overborne by all his bearded lords  
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce  
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur :  
And many a bold knight started up in heat,  
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field  
Flat to the garden-wall ; and likewise here,  
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,  
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,  
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris  
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,  
But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat  
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,  
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,  
With message and defiance went and came ;  
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,  
But shaken here and there, and rolling words  
Oration-like. I kiss'd it, and I read :

“ O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,  
What heats of indignation when we heard  
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet ;

Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride  
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;  
Of living hearts that crack within the fire  
Where smoulder their dead despots ; and of those—  
Mothers—that, all prophetic pity, fling  
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops  
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart  
Made for all noble motion : and I saw  
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times  
With smother men : the old leaven leaven'd all  
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,  
No woman named : therefore I set my face  
Against all men, and lived but for mine own  
Far off from men I built a fold for them :  
I stored it full of rich memorial :  
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,  
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey,  
And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys  
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,  
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what  
Of insolence and love, some pretext held  
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will  
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings !—for their sport !—  
I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame these ?  
Or you ? or I ? for since you think me touch'd  
In honour—what, I would not aught of false—  
Is not our cause pure ? and whereas I know  
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood  
You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide  
What end soever : fail you will not. Still  
Take not his life : he risk'd it for my own ;  
His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,  
Fight, and fight well ; strike, and strike home. O dear  
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you  
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,  
The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,  
Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues



Rear'd, sung to, when this gad-fly brush'd aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to move  
 With claim on claim from right to right, till she  
 Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself,  
 And Knowledge in our own land make her free,  
 And, ever following those two crowned twins,  
 Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain  
 Of Freedom broadcast over all that orbs  
 Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest :  
 " See that there be no traitors in your camp :  
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust  
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague of men !  
 Almost our maids were better at their homes,  
 Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I think  
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :  
 She shall not have it back : the child shall grow  
 To prize the authentic mother of her mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 This morning : there the tender orphan hands  
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence  
 The wrath I nursed against the world : farewell."

I ceased. He said : " Stubborn, but she may sit  
 Upon a king's right hand in thunderstorms,  
 And breed up warriors ! See now, though yourself  
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs  
 That swallow common sense, the spindling king,  
 This Gama, swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
 When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,  
 And topples down the scales ; but this is fix'd  
 As are the roots of earth and base of all.  
 Man for the field and woman for the hearth :  
 Man for the sword and for the needle she :

Man with the head and woman with the heart :  
Man to command and woman to obey ;  
All else confusion. Look you ! the gray mare  
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills  
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman  
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of hell  
Mix with his hearth : but you—she's yet a colt—  
Take, break her : strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd  
She might not rank with those detestable  
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl  
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.  
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance :  
*I* like her none the less for rating at her !  
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace  
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,  
The bearing and the training of a child  
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king.

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :  
I pored upon her letter which I held,  
And on the little clause, "take not his life :"  
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,  
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win :"  
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,  
And how the strange betrothment was to end :  
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse,  
That one should fight with shadows and should fall ;  
And like a flash the weird affection came :  
King, camp, and college turn'd to hollow shows ;  
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,  
To dream myself the shadow of a dream ;  
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,  
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed  
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared



At the barrier like a wild horn in a land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more  
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears,  
And riders front to front, until they closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,  
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd  
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.  
Part sat like rocks ; part reel'd, but kept their seats  
Part roll'd on the earth, and rose again and drew ;  
Part stumbled, mixt with floundering horses. Down  
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down  
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,  
The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere  
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,  
And all the plain--brand, mace, and shaft, and shield-  
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd  
With hammers ; till I thought, can this be he  
From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so,  
The mother makes us most—and in my dream  
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
And highest, among the statues, statue-like,  
Between a cymball'd Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but she  
No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—  
Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight ;  
Yea, let her see me fall. With that I drave  
Among the thickest, and bore down a Prince,  
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream  
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,  
His visage all agrin as at a wake,  
Made at me through the press, and, staggering back

With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came  
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,  
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,  
 And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes  
 On a wood, and takes and breaks, and cracks and splits,  
 And twists the grain, with such a roar that Earth  
 Reels, and the herdsman cry, for everything  
 Gave way before him : only Florian, he  
 That loved me closer than his own right eye,  
 Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him down :  
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,  
 With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,  
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms ;  
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote  
 And threw him. Last I spurred : I felt my veins  
 Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment hand to hand,  
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,  
 Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade glanced ;  
 I did but shear a feather, and life and love  
 Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ; and I fell

## VI.

Home they brought her warrior dead :  
 She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 " She must weep, or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,  
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,  
 Truest friend and noblest foe ;  
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,  
 Lightly to the warrior stept,  
 Took the face-cloth from the face ;  
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee ;  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 " Sweet, my child, I live for thee."



My dream had never died or lived again.  
As in some mystic middle state I lay ;  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :  
Though, if I saw not, yet they told me all  
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,  
That all things grew more tragic and more strange :  
That when our side was vanquish'd, and my cause  
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,  
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran  
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque  
And grovell'd on my body ; and after him  
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood  
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs  
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang :

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed,  
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,  
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk  
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side  
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came ;  
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they heard  
A noise of songs they would not understand :  
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,  
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came,  
The woodmen with their axes : lo, the tree !  
But we will make it fagots for the hearth,  
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,  
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“ Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they struck ;  
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew  
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :  
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,  
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder-blade.

“Our enemies have fall’n, but this shall grow  
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth  
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power ; and roll’d  
With music in the growing breeze of Time,  
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs  
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

“And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary  
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not  
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms  
Champion’d our cause, and won it with a day  
Blanch’d in our annals, and perpetual feast,  
When dames and heroines of the golden year  
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,  
To rain an April of ovation round  
Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but come,  
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.  
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind—  
Ill nurses—but descend, and proffer these  
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there  
Lie bruised and maim’d, the tender ministries  
Of female hands, and hospitality.”

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,  
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led  
A hundred maids in train across the Park.  
Some cowl’d, and some bareheaded, on they came,  
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went  
The enamour’d air sighing, and on their curls  
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,  
And over them the tremulous isles of light  
Slided, they moving under shade : but Blanche  
At distance follow’d : so they came. Anon  
Through open field into the lists they wound  
Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd  
That holds a stately fretwork to the sun,  
And follow’d up by a hundred airy does,  
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,



The lovely, lordly creature floated on  
To where her wounded brethren lay ; there stay'd ;  
Knelt on one knee—the child on one—and prest  
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,  
And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
And said, “ You shall not lie in the tents, but here,  
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served  
With female hands and hospitality.”

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance?  
She pass'd my way. Up started from my side  
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,  
Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,  
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,  
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when she saw  
The haggard father's face and reverend beard  
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood  
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain  
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead pass'd  
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said :  
“ He saved my life : my brother slew him for it.”  
No more : at which the king in bitter scorn  
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,  
And held them up : she saw them, and a day  
Rose from the distance on her memory,  
When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress  
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche.  
And then once more she look'd at my pale face :  
Till understanding all the foolish work  
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
Her iron will was broken in her mind ;  
Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;  
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ; she laid  
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently,  
“ O Sire,” she said, “ he lives ; he is not dead :  
O let me have him with my brethren here  
In our own palace : we will tend on him

Like one of these ; if so, by any means,  
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
Out progress falter to the woman's goal."

She said : but at the happy word " he lives,"  
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.  
So those two foes above my fallen life,  
With brow to brow like night and evening mix'd  
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole  
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede  
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms  
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
Brook'd not, but clamouring out, " Mine—mine—not yours,  
It is not yours, but mine : give me the child,"  
Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :  
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd.  
And turn'd each face her way : wan was her cheek  
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,  
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half  
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared  
Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,  
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood  
Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
The mother, me, the child. But he that lay  
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he drew  
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd  
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying, as it seem'd,  
Or self-involved ; but when she learnt his face,  
Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
Once more through all her height, and o'er him grew



Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

“ O fair and strong and terrible ! Lioness  
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane !  
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible  
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,  
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.  
What would you more ? give her the child ! remain  
Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,  
Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :  
Win you the hearts of women ; and beware  
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,  
The common hate with the revolving wheel  
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis  
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,  
And tread you out for ever : but howsoe'er  
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms  
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,  
Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep  
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved  
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,  
Or own one part of sense not flint to prayer,  
Give her the child ! or if you scorn to lay it,  
Yourself, in hands so lately clasp'd with yours,  
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault  
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill  
Give *me* it ; *I* will give it her.”

He said.

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd  
Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and sank  
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt  
Full on the child ; she took it : “ Pretty bud !  
Lily of the vale ! half-open'd bell of the woods !  
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world  
Of traitorous friend and broken system made  
No purple in the distance, mystery,

Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell !  
These men are hard upon us as of old,  
We two must part : and yet how fain was I  
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think  
I might be something to thee, when I felt  
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast  
In the dead prime : but may thy mother prove  
As true to thee as false, false, false to me !  
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it  
Gentle as freedom"—here she kiss'd it : then—  
"All good go with thee ! take it, Sir," and so  
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,  
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang  
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks ;  
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,  
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,  
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,  
And hid her bosom with it ; after that  
Put on more calm and added suppliantly :

"We two were friends : I go to mine own land  
For ever : find some other : as for me  
I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak to me,  
Say one soft word, and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.  
Then Arac : "Ida—'sdeath ! you blame the man ;  
You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard  
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me !  
I am your warrior ; I and mine have fought  
Your battle : kiss her ; take her hand, she weeps ;  
'Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground ;  
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said :

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,  
And I believe it. Not one word ? not one ?



Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,  
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.  
She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—  
'Our Ida has a heart'—just ere she died—  
'But see that some one with authority  
Be near her still,' and I—I sought for one—  
All people said she had authority—  
The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one word;  
No! though your father sues: see how you stand  
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,  
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,  
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,  
Was it for this we gave our palace up  
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,  
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,  
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,  
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?  
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,  
When first she came, all-flush'd you said to me  
Now had you got a friend of your own age,  
Now could you share your thought; now should men see  
Two women faster welded in one love  
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with, she  
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,  
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now  
A word, but one, one little kindly word,  
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!  
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,  
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?  
You will not? well—no heart have you, or such  
As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness."  
So said the small king, moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force  
By many a varying influence and so long.

Down through her limbs a drooping languor wept :  
 Her head a little bent ; and on her mouth  
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon  
 In a still water : then brake out my sire,  
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds : “ O you,  
 Woman, whom we thought woman even now,  
 And were half fool’d to let you tend our son,  
 Because he might have wish’d it—but we see  
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,  
 And think that you might mix his draught with death,  
 When your skies change again : the rougher hand  
 Is safer : on to the tents : take up the Prince.”

He rose, and while each ear was prick’d to attend  
 A tempest, through the cloud that dimm’d her broke  
 A genial warmth and light once more, and shone  
 Through glittering drops on her sad friend.

“ Come hither.

O Psyche,” she cried out, “ embrace me, come,  
 Quick while I melt ; make reconciliation sure  
 With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :  
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so !  
 Kiss and be friends, like children being chid !  
 I seem no more : I want forgiveness too :  
 I should have had to do with none but maids,  
 That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,  
 Dear traitor too much loved, why ?—why ?—Yet see  
 Before these kings we embrace you yet once more  
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love you less.

And now, O Sire,  
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,  
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,  
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it ;  
 Taunt me no more : yourself and yours shall have  
 Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids  
 Till happier times each to her proper hearth :



What use to keep them here now? grant my prayer.  
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:  
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that  
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down  
From my fix'd height to mob me up with all  
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,  
Poor weakling ev'n as they are."

Passionate tears  
Follow'd; the king replied not; Cyril said:  
"Your brother, Lady—Florian—ask for him  
Of your great Head—for he is wounded too—  
That you may tend upon him with the Prince."  
"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,  
"Our laws are broken: let him enter too."  
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,  
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she said,  
"I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep  
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:  
We break our laws with ease, but let it be."  
"Ay so?" said Blanche. "Amazed am I to hear  
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease  
The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.  
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,  
And block'd them out; but these men came to woo  
Your Highness—verily I think to win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye.  
But Ida, with a voice that, like a bell  
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,  
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn:

"Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,  
Not only he, but, by thy mother's soul,  
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,  
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,  
Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,

The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base  
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,  
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.  
We brook no further insult but are gone."

She turn'd ; the very nape of her white neck  
Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince  
Her brother came ; the king her father charm'd  
Her wounded soul with words ; nor did mine own  
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare  
Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave way  
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd  
The virgin marble under iron heels :  
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there  
Rested : but great the crush was, and each base,  
To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd  
In silken fluctuation and the swarm  
Of female whisperers : at the farther end  
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats  
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,  
Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre stood  
The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed  
They glared upon the women, and aghast  
The women stared at these, all silent, save  
When armour clash'd or jingled, while the day,  
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot  
A flying splendour out of brass and steel,  
That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,  
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,  
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,  
And now and then an echo started up,  
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died  
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice  
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :



And me they bore up the broad stairs and through  
 The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors  
 To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due  
 To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;  
 And others elsewhere they laid ; and all  
 That afternoon a sound arose of hoof  
 And chariot, many a maiden passing home  
 Till happier times ; but some were left of those  
 Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,  
 From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,  
 Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.

## VII.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea ;  
 The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,  
 With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;  
 But, O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ?  
 Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I give ?  
 I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :  
 Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !  
 Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;  
 Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are seal'd ;  
 I strove against the stream, and all in vain :  
 Let the great river take me to the main :  
 No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;  
 Ask me no more.

So was their sanctuary violated,  
 So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;  
 At first with all confusion : by and by  
 Sweet order lived again with other laws :  
 A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere  
 Low voices with the ministering hand  
 Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they talk'd,  
 They sang, they read : till she not fair began  
 To gather light, and she that was became

Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro  
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,  
Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.  
Old studies fail'd : seldom she spoke ; but oft  
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours  
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men  
Darkening her female field : void was her use ;  
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze  
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud  
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,  
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,  
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,  
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn  
Expunge the world : so fared she gazing there ;  
So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank  
And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down she came  
And found fair peace once more among the sick.  
And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by morn the lark  
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I  
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :  
And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-grown the bowers  
Drew the great night into themselves, and heaven,  
Star after star, arose and fell ; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay  
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,  
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand  
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her oft  
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but left  
Her child among us, willing she should keep  
Court-favour : here and there the small bright head,  
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,



Or through the parted silks the tender face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man  
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves  
To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw  
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon  
He rose up whole, and those fair charities  
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts  
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,  
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake  
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,  
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd  
At first with Psyche. Not though Blanche had sworn  
That after that dark night among the fields,  
She needs must wed him for her own good name ;  
Not though he built upon the babe restored ;  
Nor though she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd  
To incense the Head once more ; till on a day  
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind  
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung  
A moment, and she heard, at which her face  
A little flush'd, and she pass'd on ; but each  
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved  
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls  
Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.  
Nor did her father cease to press my claim ;  
Nor did mine own, now reconciled ; nor yet  
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;  
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat.  
Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,

And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,  
“ You are not Ida ; ” clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, though I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold, which seem'd a truth :  
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,  
And often she believed that I should die :  
Till out of long frustration of her care,  
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,  
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks  
Throbb'd thunder through the palace floors, or call'd  
On flying Time from all their silver tongues—  
And out of memories of her kindlier days,  
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,  
And at the happy lovers heart in heart—  
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,  
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,  
And often feeling of the helpless hands,  
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek ;—  
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,  
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,  
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears  
By some cold morning glacier—frail at first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death  
For weakness. It was evening : silent light  
Slept on the painted walls, whereon were wrought  
Two grand designs ; for on one side arose  
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd  
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd  
The Forum, and half-crush'd among the rest  
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side  
Hortensia spoke against the tax ; behind,  
A train of dames : by axe and eagle sat,  
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,



And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,  
The fierce triumvirs ; and before them paused  
Hortensia, pleading : angry was her face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where I was :  
They did but look like hollow shows. Nor more  
Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the dew  
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape  
And rounder seem'd. I moved ; I sigh'd : a touch  
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand :  
Then all for languor and self-pity ran  
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,  
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,  
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,  
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her  
Fix'd my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly :

“ If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,  
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.  
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,  
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,  
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,  
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd ; she paus'd ;  
She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt a cry—  
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;  
And I believed that in the living world  
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;  
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose  
Glowing all over noble shame ; and all  
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,  
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood  
Than in her mould that other, when she came

From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;  
 And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she  
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,  
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,  
 To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out  
 For worship without end ; nor end of mine,  
 Stateliest, for thee ! But mute she glided forth,  
 Nor glanced behind her ; and I sank and slept,  
 Fill'd through and through with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near me, held  
 A volume of the Poets of her land :  
 There to herself, all in low tones, she read :

“ Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ;  
 Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;  
 Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :  
 The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

“ Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,  
 And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

“ Now lies the Earth all Danae to the stars,  
 And all thy heart lies open unto me.

“ Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves  
 A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

“ Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,  
 And slips into the bosom of the lake :  
 So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip  
 Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page ; she found a small  
 Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read :

“ Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height  
 What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),  
 In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?  
 But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease  
 To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,  
 To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;  
 And come, for Love is of the valley, come,



For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
 And find him ; by the happy threshold, he.  
 Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
 Or red with spirted purple of the vats,  
 Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk  
 With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
 Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
 Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,  
 That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls  
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :  
 But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down  
 To find him in the valley ; let the wild  
 Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave  
 The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill  
 Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke  
 That like a broken purpose waste in air :  
 So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales  
 Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth  
 Arise to thee ; the children call, and I  
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
 Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;  
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn  
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
 And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned ; while with shut eyes I lay  
 Listening ; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face ;  
 The bosom with long sighs labour'd ; and meek  
 Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,  
 And the voice trembled and the hand. She said  
 Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd  
 In sweet humility ; had fail'd in all ;  
 That all her labour was but as a block  
 Left in the quarry : but she still were loth,  
 She still were loth to yield herself to one  
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights  
 Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.  
 She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her  
 That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power  
 In knowledge : something wild within her breast,  
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.

And she had nursed me there from week to week :  
Much had she learnt in little time. In part  
It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl—  
“ Ah, fool, and made myself a Queen of farce !  
When comes another such ? never, I think,  
Till the sun drop dead from the signs.”

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,  
And her great heart through all the faultful Past  
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break ;  
Till notice of a change in the dark world  
Was lisp'd about the acacias, and a bird,  
That early woke to feed her little ones,  
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light :  
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

“ Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “ nor blame  
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws ;  
These were the rough ways of the world till now.  
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know  
The woman's cause is man's : they rise or sink  
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free :  
For she that out of Lethe scales with man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man  
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,  
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—  
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,  
How shall men grow ? but work no more alone !  
Our place is much : as far as in us lies  
We too will serve them both in aiding her—  
Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag her down—  
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all  
Within her—let her make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.



For woman is not undeveloped man,  
 But diverse : could we make her as the man,  
 Sweet Love were slain : his dearest bond is this,  
 Not like to like, but like in difference.  
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;  
 The man be more of woman, she of man ;  
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world ;  
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;  
 Till at the last she set herself to man,  
 Like perfect music unto noble words :  
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,  
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,  
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the 'To-be,  
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,  
 Distinct in individualities,  
 But like each other ev'n as those who love.  
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :  
 Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm  
 Then springs the crowning race of humankind.  
 May these things be !"

Sighing she spoke, " I fear  
 They will not."

" Dear, but let us type them now  
 In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest  
 Of equal ; seeing either sex alone  
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
 Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils  
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
 The single pure and perfect animal,  
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,  
 Life."

And again, sighing, she spoke : " A dream  
 That once was mine ! what woman taught you this ?"  
 " Alone," I said, " from earlier than I know,

Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,  
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives  
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,  
 Or pines in sad experience worse than death,  
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime :  
 Yet was there one through whom I loved her, one  
 Not learned, save in gracious household ways,  
 Nor perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,  
 No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt  
 In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,  
 Interpreter between the Gods and men,  
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet  
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere  
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce  
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved  
 And girdled her with music. Happy he  
 With such a mother ! faith in womankind  
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
 Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall  
 He shall not blind his soul with clay."

" But I,"

Said Ida, tremulously, " so all unlike—  
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :  
 This mother is your model. I have heard  
 Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem  
 A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;  
 You cannot love me."

" Nay but thee," I said,  
 " From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,  
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw  
 Thee woman through the crust of iron moods  
 That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and forced  
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now  
 Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, through thee  
 Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light  
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
 Lived over ; lift thine eyes : my doubts are dead,



My haunting sense of hollow shows : the change,  
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,  
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,  
 Like yonder morning on the blind half-world ;  
 Approach, and fear not ; breathe upon my brows ;  
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
 Melts mistlike into this bright hour, and this  
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come  
 Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels  
 Athwart the smoke of burning leaves. Forgive me,  
 I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,  
 My wife, my life. Oh, we will walk this world  
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
 And so through those dark gates across the wild  
 That no man knows. Indeed I love thee : come,  
 Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine are one :  
 Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself ;  
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

## CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all  
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose.  
 The words are mostly mine ; for when we ceased  
 There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,  
 " I wish she had not yielded ! "—then to me,  
 " What, if you drest it up poetically ! "  
 So pray'd the men, the women : I gave assent :  
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven  
 Together in one sheaf ? What style could suit ?  
 The men required that I should give throughout  
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque  
 With which we banter'd little Lilia first :  
 The women—and perhaps they felt their power,  
 For something in the ballads which they sang,  
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque.

And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—  
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,  
A gallant fight, a noble princess—why  
Not make her true-heroic, true-sublime?  
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?  
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.  
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :  
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,  
And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part  
In our dispute : the sequel of the tale  
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,  
She flung it from her, thinking : last, she fix'd  
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,  
“ You—tell us what we are,” who might have told,  
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,  
But that there rose a shout : the gates were closed  
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,  
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these : we climb'd  
The slope to Vivian Place, and turning saw  
The happy valleys half in light, and half  
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace :  
Gray halls alone among their massive groves ;  
Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower  
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ;  
The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;  
A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,  
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

“ Look there, a garden ! ” said my college friend,  
The Tory member's elder son, “ and there !  
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,



And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,  
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—  
 Some sense of duty, something of a faith,  
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,  
 Some patient force to change them when we will,  
 Some civic manhood firm against the crowd ;—  
 But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden heat,  
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,  
 The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,  
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,  
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the world  
 In mock-heroics stranger than our own ;  
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out ;  
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
 As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas !  
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

" Have patience," I replied, " ourselves are full  
 Of social wrong ; and maybe wildest dreams  
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth.  
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.  
 This fine old world of ours is but a child  
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience ! give it time  
 To learn its limbs : there is a hand that guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,  
 And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,  
 Before a tower of crimson hollyhocks,  
 Among six boys, head under head, and look'd  
 No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
 A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,  
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,

A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
A patron of some thirty charities,  
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,  
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none ;  
Fair-hair'd, and redder than a windy morn ;  
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those  
That stood the nearest—now address'd to speech—  
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed  
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year  
To follow : a shout rose again, and made  
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve  
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer  
From slope to slope through distant ferns, and rang  
Beyond the bourn of sunset ; oh, a shout  
More joyful than the city-roar that hails  
Premier or king ! Why should not these great Sirs  
Give up their parks some dozen times a year  
To let the people breathe ? So thrice they cried,  
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,  
So much the gathering darkness charm'd : we sat  
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,  
Perchance upon the future man : the walls  
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,  
And gradually the powers of the night,  
That range above the region of the wind,  
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up  
Through all the silent spaces of the worlds,  
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph  
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.



# IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBITU MDCCCXXXIII.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade :  
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine.  
The highest, holiest manhood thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day, and cease to be :  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see ;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
We mock thee when we do not fear :  
But help thy foolish ones to bear,  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,  
What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.



I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
    To one clear harp in divers tones,  
    That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
    And find in loss a gain to match?  
    Or reach a hand through time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
    Let darkness keep her raven gloss;  
    Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

'Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
    The long result of love, and boast:  
    "Behold the man that loved and lost,  
But all he was is overworn."

## II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
    That name the under-lying dead,  
    Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
    And bring the firstling to the flock;  
    And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

Oh not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
    Who changest not in any gale!  
    Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood,  
And grow incorporate into thee.

## III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

“The stars,” she whispers, “blindly run ;  
A web is wov’n across the sky ;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun :

“And all the phantom, Nature, stands—  
With all her music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A hollow form with empty hands.”

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good ;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

## IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
“What is it makes me beat so low ?”



Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes ;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
“ Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.”

## v.

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel ;  
For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies ;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;  
But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline, and no more.

## vi.

One writes, that “ Other friends remain,”  
That “ Loss is common to the race ”—  
And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more :  
Too common ! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
That pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor,—while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well ;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,  
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest ;  
And thinking " This will please him best,"  
She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night :  
And with the thought her colour burns ;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future Lord  
Was drown'd in passing through the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.



Oh what to her shall be the end?  
And what to me remains of good?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood;  
And unto me, no second friend.

## VII.

Dark house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly through the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## VIII.

A happy lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who lights and rings the gateway bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens; all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall;  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to meet,  
The field, the chamber, and the street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;  
So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.  
But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying there at least may die.

## IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore,  
Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Artnur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.  
So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Through prosperous floods his holy urn.  
All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, through early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.  
Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;  
My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.



## X.

I hear the noise about thy keel ;  
    I hear the bell struck in the night ;  
    I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
    And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
    And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
    This look of quiet flatters thus  
    Our home-bred fancies : oh, to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
    That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
    Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
    Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;  
    And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
    Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
    And only through the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
    And on these dews that drench the furze,  
    And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear through Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying : " Comes he thus, my friend ?  
Is this the end of all my care ?"  
And circle moaning in the air :  
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ?"

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.



## XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
An awful thought, a life removed,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me many years  
I do not suffer in a dream ;  
For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approaching sails,  
As though they brought but merchants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV.

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;  
And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;  
And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day ;  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;  
The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world :  
And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir  
That makes the barren branches loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud  
That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a labouring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.



## XVI.

What words are these have fall'n from me?  
 Can calm despair and wild unrest  
 Be tenants of a single breast,  
 Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
 The touch of change in calm or storm;  
 But knows no more of transient form  
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
 And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
 And stunn'd me from my power to think,  
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
 And flashes into false and true,  
 And mingles all without a plan?

## XVI .

Thou comest, much wept for : such a breeze  
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
 Was as the whisper of an air  
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
 Through circles of the bounding sky ;  
 Week after week : the days go by :  
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee ;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII.

'Tis well, 'tis something, we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps, or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing through his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me :

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.



## XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave  
    ' The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
    They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
    The salt sea-water passes by,  
    And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along ;  
    And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
    When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
    Is vocal in its wooded walls :  
    My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
    That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
    Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead .

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
    And weep the fulness from the mind :  
    " It will be hard," they say, " to find  
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,  
    That out of words a comfort win ;  
    But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
“ How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.”

## XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak :  
“ This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.”

Another answers : “ Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.”

A third is wroth : “ Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon ?”

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing :



And unto one her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged ;  
And unto one her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Through four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, though I walk in haste,  
And think that, somewhere in the waste,  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where it ran  
Through lands where not a leaf was dumb  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought,  
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,  
And all was good that Time could bring,  
And all the secret of the Spring  
Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

And many an old philosophy  
On Argive heights divinely sang,  
And round us all the thicket rang  
To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV.

And was the day of my delight  
As pure and perfect as I say ?  
The very source and fount of Day  
It dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
This earth had been the Paradise  
It never look'd to human eyes  
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief  
Makes former gladness loom so great ?  
The lowness of the present state,  
That sets the past in this relief ?



Or that the past will always win  
 A glory from its being far ;  
 And orb into the perfect star  
 We saw not, when we moved therein ?

## XXV.

I know that this was Life—the track  
 Whereon with equal feet we fared ;  
 And then, as now, the day prepared  
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
 As light as carrier-birds in air ;  
 I loved the weight I had to bear,  
 Because it needed help of Love :

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
 When mighty Love would cleave in twain  
 The lading of a single pain,  
 And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way :  
 I with it ; for I long to prove  
 ' No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
 And goodness, and hath power to see  
 Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
 And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
 Or see (in Him is no before)  
 In more of life true life no more,  
 And Love the indifference to be,

So might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To cloak me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII.

I envy not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes  
His licence in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime  
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall,  
I feel it when I sorrow most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid, the night is still ;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :



Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight,  
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont  
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time? They too will die.

## xxx.

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
We heard them sweep the winter land ;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
We sung, though every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
“ They rest,” we said, “ their sleep is sweet,”  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
Once more we sang : “ They do not die,  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

“ Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.”

Rise, happy morn ! rise, holy morn !  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
O Father ! touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.



## XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
And home to Mary's house return'd,  
Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave?

“Where wert thou, brother, those four days?”  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
He told it not; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

## XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good.  
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live for evermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
Fantastic beauty, such as lurks  
In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.



What then were God to such as I ?  
 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose  
 Of things all mortal, or to use  
 A little patience ere I die ;  
 'Twere best at once to sink to peace ;  
 Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
 Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

## XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could trust  
 Should murmur from the narrow house,  
 " The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
 Man dies : nor is there hope in dust : "  
 Might I not say, " Yet even here,  
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
 To keep so sweet a thing alive ? "  
 But I should turn mine ears and hear  
 The moanings of the homeless sea,  
 The sound of streams that swift or slow  
 Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
 The dust of continents to be ;  
 And Love would answer with a sigh,  
 " The sound of that forgetful shore  
 Will change my sweetness more and more,  
 Half-dead to know that I shall die. "  
 O me, what profits it to put  
 An idle case ? If Death were seen  
 At first as Death, Love had not been,  
 Or been in narrowest working shut,  
 Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
 Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,  
 And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI.

Though truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where Truth in closest words shall fail,  
When Truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow :  
"Thou pratest here where thou art least ;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
"I am not worthy but to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;



“ For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues ;

“ But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear as sacramental wine,  
To dying lips is all he said),

“ I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd ;  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song.”

## XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,  
Though always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX.

Could we forget the widow'd hour,  
And look on spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
    To take her latest leave of home,  
    And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
    And tears are on the mother's face,  
    As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
    Becoming as is meet and fit  
    A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
    A life that bears immortal fruit  
    In such great offices as suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
    How often shall her old fireside  
    Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
    And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
    Till even those that miss'd her most  
Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
    Till growing winters lay me low ;  
    My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XL.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
    Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
    As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
As flies the lighter through the gross.



But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
 And I have lost the links that bound  
 Thy changes ; here upon the ground,  
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be—  
 That I could wing my will with might  
 To leap the grades of life and light,  
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee :

For though my nature rarely yields  
 To that vague fear implied in death ;  
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
 The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
 An inner trouble I behold,  
 A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
 That I shall be thy mate no more,

Though following with an upward mind  
 The wonders that have come to thee.  
 Through all the secular to-be,  
 But evermore a life behind.

## XLI.

I vex my heart with fancies dim :  
 He still outstript me in the race ;  
 It was but unity of place  
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
 And he the much-beloved again,  
 A lord of large experience, train  
 To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
 When one that loves but knows not, reaps  
 A truth from one that loves and knows ?

## XLII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom  
Through all its intervital gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on :

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last,  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
But that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began :

And love would last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIII.

How fares it with the happy dead ?  
For here the man is more and more ;  
But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years  
(If Death so taste Lethean springs)  
May some dim touch of earthly things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.



If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt ;  
My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLIV.

The baby new to earth and sky,  
What time his tender palm is prest  
Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that " This is I."

But as he grows he gathers much,  
And learns the use of " I," and " me,"  
And finds " I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind  
From whence clear memory may begin,  
As through the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
Which else were fruitless of their due,  
Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLV.

We ranging down this lower track,  
The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last  
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past ;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;  
The fruitful hours of still increase ;  
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVI.

That each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside ;  
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good ;  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth ? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,  
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
" Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light."

## XLVII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
Were taken to be such as closed  
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn.



Her care is not to part and prove :  
    She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
    What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with words ;  
    But better serves a wholesome law,  
    And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords.

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
    But rather loosens from the lip  
    Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLVIII.

From art, from nature, from the schools,  
    Let random influences glance,  
    Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
    The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
    The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
    But blame not thou the winds that make  
    The seeming-wanton ripple break.  
The tender-pencill'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears,  
    Ay me ! the sorrow deepens down,  
    Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## XLIX.

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick  
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust,  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side?  
Is there no baseness we would hide?  
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame,  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?  
There must be wisdom with great Death ;  
The dead shall look me through and through.



Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LI.

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

“ Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song.”  
The Spirit of true love replied ;  
“ Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

“ What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears ?  
What record ? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :

“ So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.”

## LII.

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green :

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live ?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIII.

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
An infant crying in the night :  
An infant crying for the light :  
And with no language but a cry.



## LIV.

The wish, that of the living whole  
     No life may fail beyond the grave,  
     Derives it not from what we have  
 The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
     That Nature lends such evil dreams  
     So careful of the type she seems,  
 So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere  
     Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
     And finding that of fifty seeds  
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
     And falling with my weight of cares  
     Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
 That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
     And gather dust and chaff, and call  
     To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LV.

“So careful of the type?” but no.  
     From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
     She cries, “A thousand types are gone:  
 I care for nothing, all shall go.

“Thou makest thine appeal to me:  
     I bring to life, I bring to death:  
     The spirit does but mean the breath:  
 I know no more.” And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
     Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
     Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,  
 Who trusted God was love indeed,  
     And love Creation's final law—  
     Though Nature, red in tooth and claw  
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—  
 Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
     Who battled for the True, the Just,  
     Be blown about the desert dust,  
 Or seal'd within the iron hills?  
 No more? A monster then, a dream,  
     A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
     That tare each other in their slime,  
 Were mellow music match'd with him.  
 O life as futile, then, as frail!  
     O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
     What hope of answer, or redress?  
 Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVI.

Peace! come away: the song of woe  
     Is after all an earthly song:  
     Peace! come away: we do him wrong  
 To sing so wildly: let us go.  
 Come, let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
     But half my life I leave behind:  
     Methinks my friend is richly shrined,  
 But I shall pass; my work will fail.  
 Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
     One set slow bell will seem to toll  
     The passing of the sweetest soul  
 That ever look'd with human eyes.



I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead ;  
And " Ave, Ave, Ave," said,  
" Adieu, adieu " for evermore !

## LVII.

In those sad words I took farewell :  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
Half-conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : " Wherefore grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

## LVIII.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me,  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life ;  
As I confess it needs must be.

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lessen from to-day,  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to come,  
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LIX.

He pass'd ; a soul of nobler tone :  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot ;  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,  
And tease her till the day draws by :  
At night she weeps, " How vain am I !  
How should he love a thing so low ? "

## LX.

If, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !



Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man,  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

## LXI

Though if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIII.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known,  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He played at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labour of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands ;  
“ Does my old friend remember me ? ”



## LXIV.

Sweet soul ! do with me as thou wilt ;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With " Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee,  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXV.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost,

Whose feet are guided through the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVI.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the chancel like a ghost  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVII.

When in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath ;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with dew  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveille to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :



But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXVIII.

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost :  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door.

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown.

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs :  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :  
I found an angel of the night :  
The voice was low, the look was bright,  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :  
The voice was not the voice of grief ;  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXIX.

I cannot see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to paint  
The face I know ; the hues are faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night :

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hand that points, and palled shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores :

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And through a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXX.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance  
And madness, thou hast forged at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went through summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul ?  
Then bring an opiate treble-strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
That thus my pleasure might be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.



## LXXI.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane :

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun ;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who mightst have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
A chequerwork of beam and shade  
From hill to hill, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime,  
When the dark hand struck down through time,  
And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd brows  
Through clouds that drench the morning star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXII.

So many worlds, so much to do,  
    So little done, such things to be,  
    How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
    The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath :  
    I curse not nature ; no, nor death,  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass : the path that each man trod  
    Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
    What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
    Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
    And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIII.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
    To those that watch it more and more,  
    A likeness hardly seen before  
Comes out—to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
    I see thee what thou art, and know  
    Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see ;  
    And what I see I leave unsaid,  
    Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.



## LXXIV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
In fitting aptest words to things,  
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days  
To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame,  
But somewhere, out of human view,  
Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXV.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
And in a moment set thy face  
Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten through  
The secular abyss to come,  
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

## LXXVI.

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him, who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief—then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVII.

Again at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :



The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost ;  
 No wing of wind the region swept ;  
 But over all things brooding slept  
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
 Again our ancient games had place,  
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?  
 No single tear, no type of pain :  
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less ?  
 O last regret, regret can die !  
 No—mixt with all this mystic frame,  
 Her deep relations are the same,  
 But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXVIII.

“ More than my brothers are to me ”—  
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
 I know thee of what force thou art,  
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
 As moulded like in Nature's mint ;  
 And hill and wood and field did print  
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
 Through all his eddying coves ; the same  
 All winds that roam the twilight came  
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd,  
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXIX.

If any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes,

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;  
I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
He bears the burthen of the weeks,  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXX.

Could I have said while he was here,  
" My love shall now no further range ;  
There cannot come a mellow change,  
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store :  
What end is here to my complaint ?  
This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
" More years had made me love thee more."



But Death returns an answer sweet :  
    “ My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
    And gave all ripeness to the grain  
It might have drawn from after-heat.”

## LXXXI.

I wage not any feud with Death  
    For changes wrought on form and face ;  
    No lower life that earth's embrace  
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
    From state to state the spirit walks ;  
    And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
    The use of virtue out of earth ;  
    I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
    The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
    He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
    O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
    Thou doest expectant Nature wrong ;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
    Thy sweetness from its proper place ?  
    Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIII.

When I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown ;  
I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;  
Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou shouldst link thy life with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine  
Had babbled " Uncle " on my knee .  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.  
I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine ;  
I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.  
I see myself an honour'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;



While now thy prosperous labour fills  
     The lips of men with honest praise,  
     And sun by sun the happy days  
 Descend below the golden hills  
 With promise of a morn as fair ;  
     And all the train of bounteous hours  
     Conduct by paths of growing powers,  
 To reverence and the silver hair ;  
 Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
     Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
     Leaving great legacies of thought,  
 Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;  
 What time mine own might also flee,  
     As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
     And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
 To the other shore, involved in thee,  
 Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
     And He that died in Holy Land  
     Would reach us out the shining hand,  
 And take us as a single soul.  
 What reed was that on which I leant ?  
     Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
     The old bitterness again, and break  
 The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXIV.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,  
     I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
     'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
 Than never to have loved at all——  
 O true in word, and tried in deed,  
     Demanding, so to bring relief  
     To this which is our common grief,  
 What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above,  
    Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
    And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
    A faithful answer from the breast,  
    Through light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
    Till on mine ear this message falls,  
    That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
    That range above our mortal state,  
    In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him through the blissful climes,  
    And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
    All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
    Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,  
    To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
    O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
    O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
    How much of act at human hands  
    The sense of human will demands  
By which we dare to live or die.



Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, though left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock through all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met ;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch—  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears.  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,  
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak :  
"Arise, and get thee forth and seek  
A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ,  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free?  
How is it? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall ;  
"'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
Or so methinks the dead would say ;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play,  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.



For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers  
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place.  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, though widow'd, may not rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXV.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
Through all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,  
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
On leagues of odour streaming far,  
To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

## LXXXVI.

I pass'd beside the reverend walls  
    In which of old I wore the gown ;  
    I roved at random through the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;  
  
And heard once more in college fanes  
    The storm their high-built organs make,  
    And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophets blazon'd on the panes ;  
  
And caught once more the distant shout,  
    The measured pulse of racing oars  
    Among the willows ; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about  
  
The same gray flats again, and felt  
    The same, but not the same ; and last  
    Up that long walk of limes I pass'd  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.  
  
Another name was on the door :  
    I linger'd ; all within was noise  
    Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;  
  
Where once we held debate, a band  
    Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
    And labour, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land ;  
  
When one would aim an arrow fair,  
    But send it slackly from the string ;  
    And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there ;  
  
And last the master-bowman, he,  
    Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
    We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace,  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden through the budded quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
Thy spirits in the dusking leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude woe—  
I cannot all command the strings ;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXVIII.

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright :  
And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town :



He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking through the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew.  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
'The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods :

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For "Ground in yonder social mill  
We rub each other's angles down,

“ And merge,” he said, “ in form and gloss  
The picturesque of man and man.”  
We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran ;  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,  
Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,  
And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

## LXXXIX.

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind ;  
That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise :  
'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear :  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine ;  
But if they came who pass'd away,  
Behold their brides in other hands ;  
The hard heir strides about their lands  
And will not yield them for a day.  
Yea, though their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
    Whatever change the years have wrought,  
    I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XC.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
    And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
    Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
    Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
    The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
    May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
    Upon the thousand waves of wheat  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
    But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
    Come, beauteous in thine after-form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## XCI.

If any vision should reveal  
    Thy likeness, I might count it vain,  
    As but the canker of the brain ;  
Yea, though it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
    Together in the days behind,  
    I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.



Yea, though it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year ;  
And though the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments,  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb ;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
The wish too strong for words to name ;  
That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIII.

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst say  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
Imaginations calm and fair,  
The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
And doubt beside the portal waits,  
They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCIV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :  
The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
    Of that glad year which once had been,  
    In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
    The silent-speaking words, and strange  
    Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
    On doubts that drive the coward back,  
    And keen through wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
    The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
    And all at once it seem'd at last  
His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd  
    About empyreal heights of thought,  
    And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
    The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—  
    The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
    In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
    Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Through memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
    The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,  
    The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :



And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume ;  
And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said,  
" The dawn, the dawn," and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mix'd their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

## XCV.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.  
I know not : one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :  
Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.  
He fought his doubts, and gather'd strength ;  
He would not make his judgment blind ;  
He faced the spectres of the mind,  
And laid them : thus he came at length  
To find a stronger faith his own ;  
And Power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone.

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVI.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;  
He finds on misty mountain-ground  
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—  
I look'd on these, and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,  
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never pass'd away ;  
The days she never can forget  
Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone ; he sits apart ;  
He loves her yet ; she will not weep ;  
Though rapt in matters dark and deep,  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss ;  
She knows not what his greatness is ;  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.  
Her faith is fix'd and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and wise,  
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
" I cannot understand : I love."

## XCVII.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him ; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine  
To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That City. All her splendour seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.  
Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna ; rather dream that there,  
A treble darkness, evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants  
Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him say,  
That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown



Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
    He told me, lives in any crowd,  
    When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,  
  
Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
    And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
    The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCVIII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
    So loud with voices of the birds,  
    So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;  
  
Who tremblest through thy darkling red  
    On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast  
    By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead ;  
  
Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
    A song that slights the coming care,  
    And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves ;  
  
Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
    To myriads on the genial earth,  
    Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.  
  
Oh, wheresoever those may be,  
    Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
    To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

## XCIX.

I wake, I rise : from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw,  
That hears the latest linnet trill ;  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right through meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## C.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down ;  
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
     The brook shall babble down the plain,  
     At noon, or when the lesser wain  
 Is twisting round the polar star ;  
 Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
     And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;  
     Or into silver arrows break  
 The sailing moon in creek and cove ;—  
 Till from the garden and the wild  
     A fresh association blow,  
     And year by year the landscape grow  
 Familiar to the stranger's child ;  
 As year by year the labourer tills  
     His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
     And year by year our memory fades  
 From all the circle of the hills.

## CI.

We leave the well-beloved place  
     Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
     The roofs that heard our earliest cry  
 Will shelter one of stranger race.  
 We go, but ere we go from home,  
     As down the garden-walks I move,  
     Two spirits of a diverse love  
 Contend for loving masterdom.  
 One whispers, " Here thy boyhood sung  
     Long since its matin song, and heard  
     The low love-language of the bird  
 In native hazels tassel-hung."  
 The other answers, " Yea, but here  
     Thy feet have stray'd in after-hours  
     With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
 And this hath made them trebly dear."



These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate claim,  
Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;  
They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CII.

On that last night before we went  
From out the doors where I was bred,  
I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
And maidens with me : distant hills  
From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang :  
They sang of what is wise and good  
And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, though veil'd, was known to me,  
The shape of him I loved, and love  
For ever : then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go  
They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
We glided, winding under ranks  
Of iris and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,  
And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watched them, wax'd in every limb ;  
I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart,

As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
Began to foam, and we to draw  
From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
But thrice as large as man he bent  
To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong :  
“ We served thee here,” they said, “ so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind ? ”

So rapt I was, they could not win  
An answer from my lips, but he  
Replying, “ Enter likewise ye  
And go with us : ” they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid, the night is still ;  
A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist—

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CIV.

This holly by the cottage-eave,  
To-night, ungather'd, shall it stand :  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows ;  
There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and mime ;  
For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.



But let no footstep beat the floor,  
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
 For who would keep an ancient form  
 Through which the spirit breathes no more ?  
 Be neither song, nor game, nor feast,  
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;  
 No dance, no motion, save alone  
 What lightens in the lucid east  
 Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.

## CV.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
 The year is dying in the night :  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.  
 Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
 The year is going, let him go ;  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.  
 Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
 For those that here we see no more ;  
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.  
 Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
 And ancient forms of party strife ;  
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.  
 Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
 The faithless coldness of the times ;  
 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite ;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVI.

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
To deck the banquet ; fiercely flies  
The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,  
Arrange the board, and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat ;  
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by :

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVII.

I will not shut me from my kind ;  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, though with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies :  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CVIII.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry ;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw through all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man ;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course :



High nature amorous of the good,  
    But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;  
    And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Through all the years of April blood ;  
A love of freedom rarely felt,  
    Of freedom in her regal seat  
    Of England, not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;  
And manhood fused with female grace  
    In such a sort, the child would twine  
    A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;—  
All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
    Have look'd on : if they look'd in vain,  
    My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CIX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
    The men of rathe and riper years ;  
    The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.  
On thee the loyal-hearted hung ;  
    The proud was half disarm'd of pride ;  
    Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.  
The stern were mild when thou wert by ;  
    The flippant put himself to school  
    And heard thee ; and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;  
While I, thy dearest, sat apart,  
    And felt thy triumph was as mine,  
    And loved them more that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art :

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CX.

The churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, through all,  
To who may grasp a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons through the gilded pale :

For who can always act? but he,  
To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be ;

So wore his outward best, and join'd  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye  
Where God and Nature met in light :

And thus he bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman,  
Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXI.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power  
Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,



Should licensed boldness gather force,  
    Becoming, when the time has birth,  
    A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,  
With many shocks that come and go,  
    With agonies, with energies,  
    With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

## CXIII.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
    Against her beauty? May she mix  
    With men and prosper? Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
    She sets her forward countenance  
    And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain,  
    She cannot fight the fear of death.  
    What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
    All barriers in her onward race  
    For power. Let her know her place :  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
    If all be not in vain ; and guide  
    Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With Wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,  
    But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
    O friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind.

I would the great world grew like thee,  
    Who grewest not alone in power  
    And knowledge, but from hour to hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## CXIV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
    Now burgeons every maze of quick  
    About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
    The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
    And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
    The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
    And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
    In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
    The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land : and in my breast  
    Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
    Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXV.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
    That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
    And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colours of the crescent prime ?

## IN MEMORIAM.

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry through the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
The dear, dear voice that I have known  
Will speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune dead ;  
Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVI.

O days and hours, your work is this,  
To hold me from my proper place,  
A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue  
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
And unto meeting, when we meet,  
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
And every span of shade that steals,  
And every kiss of toothèd wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
The giant labouring in his youth ;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;



But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends. They say  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place,  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise, and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast,  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXVIII.

Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more : the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland.  
And bright the friendship of thine eye ;  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXIX.

I trust I have not wasted breath :  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was born to other things.

## CXX.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
And ready, thou, to die with him,  
Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

## CXXI.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dewdrop paints a bow ;  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.



## CXXII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O Earth, what changes hast thou seen !  
There where the long street roars hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;  
For though my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIII.

That which we dare invoke to bless ;  
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;  
He, They, One, All ; within, without ;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor through the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice, " Believe no more,"  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd, " I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
But that blind clamour made me wise ;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I seem beheld again  
What is, and no man understands ;  
And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach through nature, moulding men.

## CXXIV.

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
Yea, though there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ,  
She did but look through dimmer eyes ;  
Or Love that play'd with gracious lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song ;  
And if the words were sweet and strong  
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXV.

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, though as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
That moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the vast of space  
Among the worlds, that all is well.

## CXXVI.

And all is well, though faith and form  
Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;  
Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n though thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell,  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar  
And smilest, knowing all is well.



## CXXVII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,  
 Is comrade of the lesser faith  
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
 Of onward time shall yet be made,  
 And thronèd races may degrade ;  
 Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
 If all your office had to do  
 With old results that look like new—  
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
 To fool the crowd with glorious lies;  
 To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
 To cramp the student at his desk,  
 To make old bareness picturesque  
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
 On you and yours. I see in part  
 That all, as in some piece of art,  
 Is toil cöoperant to an end.

## CXXVIII.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
 So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
 Oh, loved the most when most I feel  
 There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;  
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye ;  
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;  
 Loved deeplier, darklier understood ;  
 Behold I dream a dream of good,  
 And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXIX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;  
 I hear thee where the waters run ;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;  
 But though I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;  
 My love is vaster passion now ;  
 Though mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
 I have thee still, and I rejoice ;  
 I prosper, circled with thy voice ;  
 I shall not lose thee though I die.

## CXXX.

O living will that shalt endure  
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
 Rise in the spiritual rock,  
 Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
    A voice as unto him that hears,  
    A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works ; and trust,  
With faith that comes of self-control,  
    The truths that never can be proved  
    Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,  
    Demand not thou a marriage lay ;  
    In that it is thy marriage day  
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
    Since first he told me that he loved  
    A daughter of our house ; nor proved  
Since that dark day a day like this,

Though I since then have number'd o'er  
    Some thrice three years : they went and came,  
    Remade the blood and changed the frame,  
And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm  
    In dying songs a dead regret,  
    But like a statue solid-set,  
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
    Than in the summers that are flown,  
    For I myself with these have grown  
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made  
    As echoes out of weaker times,  
    As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.



But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes  
And then on thee ; they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

Oh, when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride ;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear :

For I that danc'd her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The " wilt thou " answer'd, and again  
The " wilt thou " ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet " I will " has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn :  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour ! and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour ! behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me ;  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom.  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, though in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favour'd horses wait ;  
They rise, but linger ; it is late :  
Farewell ! we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us, like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass ;  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said ;  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three times three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapour sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver through the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;  
And breaking, let the splendour fall  
To spangle all the happy shores



By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved through life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge ; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought, and loved, and did.  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God—

That God, which ever lives and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

# MAUD.

## I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers "Death."

## II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented into the ground  
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

## III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation  
    had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,  
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,  
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove through the air.

## IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd  
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,  
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I  
    heard  
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

## V.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.  
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintain'd:  
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,  
Dropt off gorg'd from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.



## VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them  
a curse,  
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own ;  
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone ?

## VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,  
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his  
word ?  
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind  
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

## VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust ;  
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,  
Cheat and be cheated, and die : who knows? we are ashes and  
dust.

## IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,  
When the poor are hovell'd and hustl'd together, each sex, like  
swine,  
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie ;  
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

## X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,  
While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,  
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life.

## XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits  
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,  
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits  
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.



## XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,  
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,  
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea—  
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

## XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the  
foam,  
That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap from his  
counter and till,  
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yard-wand,  
home.—

## XIV.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?  
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die  
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

## XV.

Would there be sorrow for *me*? there was *love* in the passionate  
shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and  
speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

## XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the  
main.  
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?  
Oh, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

## XVII.

There are workmen up at the Hall ! they are coming back from  
abroad ;

The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire :  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud ;  
I play'd with the girl when a child ; she promised then to be fair.

## XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish  
escapes,

Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,  
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the  
grapes,

Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

## XIX.

What is she now ? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a  
curse.

No, there is fatter game on the moor ; she will let me alone.

Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the  
worse.

I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

## II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm : God grant I may find it at last !  
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,  
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage pass'd,  
Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted her : where is the fault ?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,

Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it had not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,

Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,

Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,

From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of  
spleen.



## III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,  
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,  
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,  
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound ;  
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong  
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before  
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,  
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,  
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragged down by the  
     wave,  
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a gnastly glimmer, and found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

## IV.

## I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be  
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,  
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ?

## II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small !  
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite ;  
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar ;  
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;  
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light ;  
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star !



## III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?  
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd;  
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;  
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.  
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;  
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

## IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;  
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like  
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:  
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;  
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the  
shrike,  
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and  
prey.

## V.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;  
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game  
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?  
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;  
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's  
shame;  
However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

## VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,  
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,  
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.  
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,  
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:  
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

## VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,  
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;

The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.  
 I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;  
 For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more  
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

## VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.  
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them  
 about?

Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.  
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?  
 Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout?  
 I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

## IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,  
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,  
 Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;  
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing  
 dispraise

Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,  
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,  
 The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.  
 Ah, Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.  
 Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;  
 Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;  
 You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies of life.

## V.

## I.

A voice by the cedar tree,  
 In the meadow under the Hall!  
 She is singing an air that is known to me,  
 A passionate ballad gallant and gay,



A martial song like a trumpet's call !  
Singing alone in the morning of life,  
In the happy morning of life and of May,  
Singing of men that in battle array,  
Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
March with banner and bugle and fife  
To the death, for their native land.

## II.

Maud with her exquisite face,  
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,  
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

## III.

Silence, beautiful voice !  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still ! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI.

## I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd  
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :  
I had fancied it would be fair.



## II.

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street—  
Whom but Maud should I meet?  
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

## III.

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Through the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,  
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame;  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight.

## IV.

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

## V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five?  
Yet if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,

Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VI.

What if though her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, though but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—  
What if he had told her yestermorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## VII.

For a raven ever croaks at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,  
Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
For often a man's own angry pride  
Is cap and bells for a fool.

## VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
For am I not, am I not, here alone  
So many a summer since she died,  
My mother, who was so gentle and good?  
Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,

Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
 And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,  
 And my own sad name in corners cried,  
 When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown  
 About its echoing chambers wide,  
 Till a morbid hate and horror have grown  
 Of a world in which I have hardly mix'd,  
 And a morbid eating lichen fix'd  
 On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
 By that you swore to withstand?  
 For what was it else within me wrought  
 But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
 That made my tongue so stammer and trip  
 When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,  
 Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
 And the sunlight broke from her lip?

## X.

I have play'd with her when a child;  
 She remembers it now we meet.  
 Ah, well, well, well, I may be beguiled  
 By some coquettish deceit.  
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII.

## I.

Did I hear it half in a doze  
 Long since, I know not where?  
 Did I dream it an hour ago,  
 When asleep in this arm-chair?



## II.

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me ;  
“ Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
Will have plenty : so let it be.”

## III.

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night?

## IV.

Strange that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me ;  
“ Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
Will have plenty : so let it be.”

## VIII.

She came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone ;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone ;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own ;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone ;  
And thought, is it pride, and mus'd and sigh'd,  
“ No surely, now it cannot be pride.”

## IX.

I was walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,

The sun look'd out with a smile  
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor.  
 And riding at set of day  
 Over the dark moor land,  
 Rapidly riding far away,  
 She waved to me with her hand.  
 There were two at her side,  
 Something flash'd in the sun,  
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
 In a moment they were gone :  
 Like a sudden spark  
 Struck vainly in the night,  
 And back returns the dark  
 With no more hope of light.

## X.

## I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ?  
 Was not one of the two at her side  
 This new-made lord, whose splendour plucks  
 The slavish hat from the villager's head ?  
 Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
 And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine  
 Master of half a servile shire,  
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
 Rich in the grace all women desire,  
 Strong in the power that all men adore,  
 And simper and set their voices lower,  
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
 New as his title, built last year,

There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## II.

What, has he found my jewel out?  
For one of the two that rode at her side  
Bound for the Hall, I was sure was he—  
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.  
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,  
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
A bought commission, a waxen face,  
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—  
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

## III.

Last week came one to the county town,  
To preach our poor little army down,  
And play the game of the despot kings,  
Though the state has done it and thrice as well:  
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,  
Whose ear is stuff'd with his cotton, and rings  
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence—  
This huckster put down war! can he tell  
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?  
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!  
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear;  
Down too, down at your own fireside,  
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
For each is at war with mankind.



## IV.

I wish I could hear again  
 The chivalrous battle-song  
 That she warbled alone in her joy !  
 I might persuade myself then  
 She would not do herself this great wrong,  
 To take a wanton dissolute boy  
 For a man and leader of men.

## V.

Ah, God, for a man with heart, head hand,  
 Like some of the simple great ones gone  
 For ever and ever by,  
 One still strong man in a blatant land,  
 Whatever they call him, what care I,  
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one  
 Who can rule and dare not lie.

## VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
 That the man I am may cease to be !

## XI.

## I.

Oh, let the solid ground  
     Not fail beneath my feet  
 Before my life has found  
     What some have found so sweet ;  
 Then let come what come may,  
 What matter if I go mad,  
 I shall have had my day.

## II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
     Not close and darken above me  
 Before I am quite quite sure  
     That there is one to love me ;

Then let come what come may  
To a life that has been so sad,  
I shall have had my day.

XII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
When twilight was falling,  
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud? in our wood;  
And I, who else, was with her,  
Gathering woodland lilies,  
Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our wood sang  
Ringing through the valleys,  
Maud is here, here, here,  
In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
She took the kiss sedately;  
Maud is not seventeen,  
But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride  
Who have won her favour!  
Oh, Maud were sure of Heaven  
If lowliness could save her.

## MAUD.

## VI.

I know the way she went  
     Home with her maiden posy,  
 For her feet have touch'd the meadows,  
     And left the daisies rosy.

## VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
     Were crying and calling to her.  
 Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?  
     One is come to woo her.

## VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,  
     And little King Charles is snarling,  
 Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
     You are not her darling.

## XIII.

## I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
 Is that a matter to make me fret?  
 That a calamity hard to be borne?  
 Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
 Fool that I am to be vex'd with his pride!  
 I pass'd him, I was crossing his lands;  
 He stood on the path a little aside;  
 His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
 Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white  
 And six feet two, as I think, he stands;  
 But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
 And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
 Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.



## II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
 I long'd so heartily then and there  
 To give him the grasp of fellowship ;  
 But while I pass'd he was humming an air,  
 Stopt, and then with a riding-whip  
 Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
 And curving a contumelious lip,  
 Gorgonised me from head to foot  
 With a stony British stare.

## III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?  
 That old man never comes to his place :  
 Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?  
 For only once, in the village street,  
 Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
 A gray old wolf and a lean.  
 Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ;  
 For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
 She might by a true descent be untrue ;  
 And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :  
 Though I fancy her sweetness only due  
 To the sweeter blood by the other side ;  
 Her mother has been a thing complete,  
 However she came to be so allied.  
 And fair without, faithful within,  
 Maud to him is nothing akin :  
 Some peculiar mystic grace  
 Made her only the child of her mother,  
 And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
 On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
 All, all upon the brother.

## IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !  
 Has not his sister smiled on me ?

## XIV.

## I.

Maud has a garden of roses  
 And lilies fair on a lawn ;  
 There she walks in her state,  
 And tends upon bed and bower :  
 And thither I climb'd at dawn,  
 And stood by her garden-gate ;  
 A lion ramps at the top,  
 He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## II.

Maud's own little oak-room  
 (Which Maud, like a precious stone  
 Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
 Lights with herself, when alone  
 She sits by her music and books,  
 And her brother lingers late  
 With a roystering company) looks  
     Upon Maud's own garden-gate :  
 And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white  
 As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
 On the hasp of the window, and my Delight  
 Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide,  
 Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to my side,  
 There were but a step to be made.

## III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
 And again seem'd overbold ;  
 Now I thought that she cared for me,  
 Now I thought she was kind  
 Only because she was cold.

## IV.

I heard no sound where I stood  
 But the rivulet on from the lawn

Running down to my own dark wood ;  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;  
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I beheld  
The death-white curtain drawn ;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep of death.

## XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if I be dear to some one else,  
Then some one else may have much to fear;  
But if I be dear to some one else,  
Then I should be to myself more dear.  
Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
Yea, ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
If I be dear,  
If I be dear to some one else?

## XVI.

This lump of earth has left his estate  
The lighter by the loss of his weight ;  
And so that he find what he went to seek,  
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown  
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week ;  
But this is the day when I must speak,  
And I see my Oread coming down,  
O this is the day !  
O beautiful creature, what am I  
That I dare to look her way ;



Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,  
 And dream of her beauty with tender dread,  
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as the crest  
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not : oh, if she knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo it.  
 I know it the one bright thing to save  
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?  
 Should I love her so well if she  
 Had given her word to a thing so low?  
 Shall I love her as well if she  
 Can break her word were it even for me?  
 I trust that it is not so.

## III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
 For I must tell her before we part,  
 I must tell her, or die.

## XVII.

Go not, happy day,  
     From the shining fields,  
 Go not, happy day,  
     Till the maiden yields.  
 Rosy is the West,  
     Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
     And a rose her mouth.

When the happy Yes  
     Falters from her lips,  
 Pass and blush the news  
     O'er the blowing ships ;  
 Over blowing seas,  
     Over seas at rest,  
 Pass the happy news,  
     Blush it through the West:  
 Till the red man dance  
     By his red cedar tree,  
 And the red man's babe  
     Leap, beyond the sea.  
 Blush from West to East,  
     Blush from East to West,  
 Till the West is East,  
     Blush it through the West.  
 Rosy is the West,  
     Rosy is the South,  
 Roses are her cheeks,  
     And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII.

## I.

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.  
 There is none like her, none.  
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
 And sweetly, on and on  
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
 Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

## II.

None like her, none.  
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
 And shook my heart to think she comes once more ;  
 But even then I heard her close the door—  
 'The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

## III.

There is none like her, none—  
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
Oh, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,  
Sighing for Lebanon,  
Dark cedar, though thy limbs have here increased,  
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
And looking to the South, and fed  
With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
And haunted by the starry head  
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;  
And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great  
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came

## IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labour and the mattock-harden'd hand,  
Than nurs'd at ease and brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
His nothingness into man.

## V.

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl



The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

## VI.

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII.

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.  
Oh, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death ?  
Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
Maud made my Maud by that long lover's kiss,  
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?  
"The dusky strand of Death, inwoven here  
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear."

## VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?  
And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that pass'd in bridal white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses play ;  
But now by this my love has closed her sight  
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away  
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace affright !  
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight.

My own heart's heart, and ownest own, farewell ;  
 It is but for a little space I go :  
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
 Beat to the noiseless music of the night !  
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow  
 Of your soft splendours that you look so bright ?  
 / have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
 Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,  
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
 That seems to draw—but it shall not be so :  
 Let all be well, be well.

## XIX.

## I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,  
 Breaking up my dream of delight.

## II.

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?  
 I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
 Oh, when did a morning shine  
 So rich in atonement as this  
 For my dark-dawning youth,  
 Darken'd watching a mother decline,  
 And that dead man at her heart and mine :  
 For who was left to watch her but I ?  
 Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## III.

I trust that I did not talk  
 To gentle Maud in our walk  
 (For often in lonely wanderings  
 I have curs'd him even to lifeless things)  
 But I trust that I did not talk,  
 Not touch on her father's sin :

I am sure I did but speak  
Of my mother's faded cheek  
When it slowly grew so thin,  
That I felt she was slowly dying,  
Vex'd with lawyers and harass'd with debt :  
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,  
Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
A world of trouble within !

## IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved  
As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart  
From him who had ceased to share her heart,  
And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn :  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed—  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betroth'd us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born ;  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.  
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death,  
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

## V.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet :  
And none of us thought of a something beyond :  
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,  
As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;



And I was cursing them and my doom,  
And letting a dangerous thought run wild  
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
Of foreign churches—I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled !

## VI.

But then what a flint is he !  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before ;  
And this was what had redden'd her cheek  
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

## VII.

Yet Maud, although not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay  
Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

## VIII.

Kind ? but the deathbed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—  
Rough but kind ? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this.

That he plots against me still,  
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind; why, let it be so:  
For shall not Maud have her will?

## IX.

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt  
That I never can hope to pay;  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you,  
And for your sweet sake to yours,  
O then, what then shall I say?—  
If ever I *should* forget,  
May God make me more wretched  
Than ever I have been yet!

## X.

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry;  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

## XX.

## I.

Strange, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that I tried to-day  
To beguile her melancholy;  
The Sultan, as we name him—  
She did not wish to blame him—  
But he vex'd her and perplex'd her  
With his worldly talk and folly:  
Was it gentle to reprove her

For stealing out of view  
From a little lazy lover  
Who but claims her as his due?  
Or for chilling his caresses  
By the coldness of her manners,  
Nay, the plainness of her dresses?  
Now I know her but in two,  
Nor can pronounce upon it  
If one should ask me whether  
The habit, hat, and feather,  
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
Be the neater and completer;  
For nothing can be sweeter  
Than maiden Maud in either.

## II.

But to-morrow, if we live,  
Our ponderous squire will give  
A grand political dinner  
To half the squirelings near;  
And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

## III.

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance  
For the maids and marriage-makers,  
And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

## IV.

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,



I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden.  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over ;  
And then, oh then, come out to me  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendour.

## XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me,  
And lost in trouble and moving round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea,—  
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee  
(If I read her sweet will right)  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odour and colour, "Ah, be  
Among the roses to-night."

## XXII.

## I.

Come into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the roses blown.

## II.

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.

## III.

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

## IV.

I said to the lily, " There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone?  
She is weary of dance and play."  
Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day ;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

## V.

I said to the rose, " The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those  
For one that will never be thine?  
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,  
" For ever and ever, mine."

## VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall ;

And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

## VII.

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet,  
That whenever a March wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

## VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;  
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
Knowing your promise to me ;  
The lilies and roses were all awake,  
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one ;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
To the flowers, and be their sun.

## X.

There has fallen a splendid tear  
From the passion-flower at the gate.  
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;  
She is coming, my life, my fate.



The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near ;"  
 And the white rose weeps, "She is late ;"  
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear ;"  
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

## XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
 My dust would hear her and beat,  
 Had I lain for a century dead ;  
 Would start and tremble under her feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red.

## XXIII.

## I.

"The fault was mine, the fault was mine"—  
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—  
 It is this guilty hand!—  
 And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath the darkening land—  
 What is it that has been done?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,  
 The fires of Hell and of Hate ;  
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,  
 When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,  
 He came with the babe-faced lord ;  
 Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
 And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,  
 He fiercely gave me the lie,  
 Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
 And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
 Struck me before the languid fool,  
 Who was gaping and grinning by :

Struck for himself an evil stroke ;  
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe ;  
For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing echces broke  
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,  
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,  
That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.  
Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?  
" The fault was mine," he whisper'd, " fly !"  
Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;  
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
A cry for a brother's blood :  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

## II.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—  
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?  
Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.  
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,  
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive.  
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust ;  
We are not worthy to live.

## XXIV.

## I.

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,

Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl.  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design !

## II.

What is it? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Through his dim water-world?

## IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand ;  
Small, but a work divine ;  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

## V.

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear—  
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost



That never came from on high  
Nor ever arose from below,  
But only moves with the moving eye,  
Flying along the land and the main—  
Why should it look like Maud?  
Am I to be overawed  
By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

## VI.

Back from the Breton coast,  
Sick of a nameless fear,  
Back to the dark sea-line  
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
An old song vexes my ear;  
But that of Lamech is mine.

## VII.

For years, a measureless ill,  
For years, for ever, to part—  
But she, she would love me still;  
And as long, O God, as she  
Have a grain of love for me,  
So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
However weary, a spark of will  
Not to be trampled out.

## VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraugh  
With a passion so intense  
One would think that it well  
Might drown all life in the eye,—  
That it should, by being so overwrought,  
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
For a shell, or a flower, little things  
Which else would have been pass'd by!  
And now I remember, I,

When he lay dying there,  
 I noticed one of his many rings  
 (For he had many, poor worm) and thought  
 It is his mother's hair.

## IX.

Who knows if he be dead?  
 Whether I need have fled?  
 Am I guilty of blood?  
 However this may be,  
 Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,  
 While I am over the sea!  
 Let me and my passionate love go by,  
 But speak to her all things holy and high;  
 Whatever happen to me!  
 Me and my harmful love go by;  
 But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
 Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,  
 And comfort her though I die.

## XXV.

Courage, poor heart of stone!  
 I will not ask thee why  
 Thou canst not understand  
 That thou art left for ever alone:  
 Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—  
 Or if I ask thee why,  
 Care not thou to reply:  
 She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
 When thou shalt more than die.

## XXVI.

## I.

O that 'twere possible  
 After long grief and pain  
 To find the arms of my true love  
 Round me once again!

## II.

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mix'd with kisses sweeter, sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

## III.

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee :  
Ah, Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
Wha' and where they be.

## IV.

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

## VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendour falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;



'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
 And the light and shadow fleet :  
 She is walking in the meadow,  
 And the woodland echo rings ;  
 In a moment we shall meet ;  
 She is singing in the meadow,  
 And the rivulet at her feet  
 Ripples on in light and shadow  
 To the ballad that she sings.

## VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
 My bird with the shining head,  
 My cwn dove with the tender eye ?  
 But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,  
 There is some one dying or dead.  
 And a suilen thunder is roll'd ;  
 For a tumult shakes the city,  
 And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
 In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
 Without knowledge, without pity,  
 By the curtains of my bed  
 That abiding phantom cold.

## VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
 Mix not memory with doubt,  
 Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
 Pass, and cease to move about !  
 'Tis the blot upon the brain  
 That *will* show itself without

## IX.

'Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
 And the yellow vapours choke  
 The great city sounding wide ;

The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

## X.

Through the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,  
Through all that crowd confused and loud,  
The shadow still the same ;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## XI.

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering through the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

## XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say, "Forgive the wrong,"  
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest"?

## XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets,  
And will not let me be ;  
And I loathe the squares and streets.

And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me :  
Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

## XXVII.

## I.

Dead, long dead,  
Long dead !  
And my heart is a handful of dust.  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,  
For into a shallow grave they are thrust.  
Only a yard beneath the street,  
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
The hoofs of the horses beat,  
Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,  
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter ;  
And here beneath it is all as bad,  
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so :  
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad ?  
But up and down and to and fro,  
Ever about me the dead men go ;  
And then to hear a dead man chatter  
Is enough to drive one mad.

## II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
They cannot even bury a man :  
And though we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,  
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read ;  
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead ;



There is none that does his work, not one ;  
A touch of their office might have suffic'd,  
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,  
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
No limit to his distress ;  
And another, a lord of all things, praying  
To his own great self, as I guess ;  
And another, a statesman there, betraying  
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
The case of his patient—all for what ?  
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,  
And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
For the prophecy given of old,  
And then not understood,  
Has come to pass as foretold ;  
Not let any man think for the public good,  
But babble, merely for babble.  
For I never whisper'd a private affair  
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house ;  
Everything came to be known.  
Who told *him* we were there ?

## V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back  
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie ;  
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to crack ;  
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

## VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;  
I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,  
But I know that he lies and listens mute  
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes :  
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls,  
It is all used up for that.

## VII.

Tell him now ; she is standing here at my head ;  
Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
He may take her now ; for she never speaks her mind,  
But is ever the one thing silent here.  
She is not of us, as I divine ;  
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,  
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,  
Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
All made up of the lily and rose  
That blow by night, when the season is good,  
To the sound of dancing music and flutes :  
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood ;  
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
He link'd a dead man there to a spectral bride ;  
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,  
Would he have that hole in his side ?

## IX.

But what will the old man say ?  
He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day ;

Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;  
For what will the old man say  
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

## X.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
Then to strike him and lay him low,  
That were a public merit, far,  
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;  
But the red life spilt for a private blow—  
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
Are scarcely even akin.

## XI.

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?  
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough—  
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
Then I cannot be wholly dumb :  
I will cry to the steps above my head,  
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come  
To bury me, bury me  
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## XXVIII.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
'Through cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :  
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
That like a silent lightning under the stars  
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,



And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—  
“And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
Knowing I tarry for thee,” and pointed to Mars  
As he glow’d like a ruddy shield on the Lion’s breast.

## II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
To have look’d, though but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright ;  
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten’d my despair  
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
Nor Britain’s one sole God be the millionaire :  
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
And the cobweb woven across the cannon’s throat  
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## III.

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,  
“It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,” said I  
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),  
“It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.”  
And I stood on a giant deck and mix’d my breath  
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;

And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !  
Though many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar ;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## V.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,  
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind ;  
It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill ;  
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.



# IDYLS OF THE KING.

## ENID.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,  
A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
Had wedded Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.  
And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint  
To make her beauty vary day by day.  
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's eye.  
Who first had found and loved her in a state  
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendour ; and the Queen herself,  
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,  
Lov'd her, and often with her own white hands  
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court.  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.  
But when a rumour rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Though yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard  
The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,  
Not less Geraint believed it ; and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,



Through that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
In nature : wherefore going to the King,  
He made this pretext, that his pryncedom lay  
Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,  
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law :  
And therefore, till the King himself should please  
To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,  
He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches ; and the King  
Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores  
Of Severn, and they pass'd to their own land ;  
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his pryncedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.  
And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes ;  
This too the women who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,  
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more :  
And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy ;

While he that watch'd her sadden, was the more  
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last it chanced that on a summer morn  
(They sleeping each by other) the new sun  
Beat through the blindless casement of the room,  
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams ;  
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his throat,  
The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,  
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
Was ever man so grandly made as he ?  
Then, like a shadow, pass'd the people's talk  
And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said :

“ O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men  
Reproach you, saying all your force is gone ?  
I *am* the cause, because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they say.  
And yet I hate that he should linger here ;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liefer had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mightful hand striking great blows  
At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his eyes,  
Than that my lord through me should suffer shame.



Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or maybe pierc'd to death before mine eyes,  
And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy?  
O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her weep  
True tears upon his broad and naked breast,  
And these awoke him, and by great mischance  
He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.  
And then he thought, "In spite of all my care,  
For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,  
She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's hall."  
Then though he lov'd and reverenc'd her too much  
To dream she could be guilty of foul act,  
Right through his manful breast darted the pang  
That makes a man, in the sweet face of her  
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.  
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,  
And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried,  
"My charger and her palfrey;" then to her,  
"I will ride forth into the wilderness;  
For though it seems my spurs are yet to win,  
I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.  
And you, put on your worst and meanest dress  
And ride with me." And Enid ask'd, amaz'd,  
"If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault."  
But he, "I charge you, ask not, but obey."  
Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
Wherein she kept them folded reverently



With sprigs of summer laid between the folds,  
She took them, and array'd herself therein,  
Remembering when first he came on her  
Drest in that dress, and how he lov'd her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey to her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,  
Before him came a forester of Dean,  
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart  
Taller than all his fellows, milky white,  
First seen that day : these things he told the King.  
Then the good King gave order to let blow  
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.  
And when the Queen petition'd for his leave  
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
So with the morning all the court were gone.  
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love  
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt ;  
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood ;  
There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
Waiting to hear the hounds ; but heard instead  
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,  
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
Came quickly flashing through the shallow ford  
Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
In summer suit and silks of holiday.

Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
Sweetly and statelily, and with all grace  
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him :  
“ Late, late, Sir Prince,” she said, “ later than we ! ”  
“ Yea, noble Queen,” he answer'd, “ and so late  
That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
Not join it.” “ Therefore wait with me,” she said ;  
“ For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds :  
Here often they break covert at our feet.”

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,  
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode  
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf ;  
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight  
Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
In the King's hall, desired his name, and sent  
Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf ;  
Who being vicious, old and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should not know.  
“ Then will I ask it of himself,” she said.  
“ Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,” cried the dwarf ;  
“ Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him ; ”  
And when she put her horse toward the knight,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
Indignant to the Queen ; at which Geraint  
Exclaiming, “ Surely I will learn the name,”  
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,  
Who answer'd as before ; and when the Prince  
Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,  
Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.  
The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it ; and his quick, instinctive hand



Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him :  
But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd  
From ev'n a word, and so returning said :

" I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself :  
And I will track this vermin to their earths ;  
For though I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at, arms  
On loan, or else for pledge ; and, being found,  
Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,  
And on the third day will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell."

" Farewell, fair Prince," answered the stately Queen,  
" Be prosperous in this journey, as in all ;  
And may you light on all things that you love,  
And live to wed with her whom first you love.  
But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,  
And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
Yea, though she were a beggar from the hedge,  
Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard  
The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vex'd at losing of the hunt,  
A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, through many a grassy glade  
And valley, with fix'd eye following the three.  
At last they issued from the world of wood,  
And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.  
And thither came Geraint, and underneath  
Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side of which,  
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose ;



And on one side a castle in decay,  
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine :  
And out of town and valley came a noise  
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamour of the rooks  
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,  
And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.  
"So," thought Geraint, "I have track'd him to his earth."  
And down the long street riding wearily,  
Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd  
His master's armour ; and of such a one  
He ask'd, "What means the tumult in the town ?"  
Who told him, scouring still, "The sparrow-hawk !"  
Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here ?  
Who answer'd gruffly, "Ugh ! the sparrow-hawk."  
Then riding farther past an armourer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,  
Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query ; but the man  
Not turning round, nor looking at him, said :  
"Friend, he that labours for the sparrow-hawk  
Has little time for idle questioners."  
Wherat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen :  
"A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk !  
Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead !  
Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
The murmur of the world ! What is it to me ?  
O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks !  
Speak, if you be not like the rest, hawk-mad,

Where can I get me harbourage for the night?  
And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!  
At this the armourer, turning all amazed  
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,  
Came forward with the helmet yet in hand,  
And answer'd, "Pardon me, O stranger knight;  
We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
And there is scanty time for half the work.  
Arms? truth! I know not: all are wanted here.  
Harbourage? truth, good truth, I know not, save,  
It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
Yonder." He spoke, and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.  
There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl  
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,  
Once fit for feasts of ceremony), and said:  
"Whither, fair son?" to whom Geraint replied,  
"O friend, I seek a harbourage for the night."  
Then Yniol, "Enter, therefore, and partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd."  
"Thanks, venerable friend," replied Geraint;  
"So that you do not serve me sparrow-hawks  
For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast."  
Then sigh'd and smil'd the hoary-headed Earl,  
And answer'd, "Graver cause than yours is mine  
To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk.  
But in, go in; for save yourself desire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest."

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly star  
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look'd, and saw that all was ruinous.



Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern ;  
And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,  
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers :  
And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound  
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,  
And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd  
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear through the open casement of the hall,  
Singing ; and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form,—  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint ;  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,  
And he suspends his converse with a friend,  
Or it may be the labour of his hands,  
To think or say, "There is the nightingale,"—  
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,  
"Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one  
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang :

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud ;  
Turn thy wild wheel through sunshine, storm, and cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.



"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown;  
With that wild wheel we go not up or down;  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands;  
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands;  
For man is man and master of his fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd;  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate."

"Hark, by the bird's song you may learn the nest,"  
Said Yniol; "enter quickly." Entering then,  
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobwebb'd hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade;  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white,  
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,  
"Here by God's rood is the one maid for me."  
But none spake word except the hoary Earl:  
"Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the court;  
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and then  
Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine;  
And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great."

He spake: the Prince, as Enid pass'd him, fain  
To follow, strode a stride; but Yniol caught  
His purple scarf, and held, and said, "Forbear!  
Rest! the good house, though ruin'd, O my son,  
Endures not that her guest should serve himself."  
And reverencing the custom of the house,  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall;  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the Prince and Earl

Yet spoke together, came again with one.  
A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and wine.  
And Enid brought sweet cakes to make them cheer,  
And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
And then, because their hall must also serve  
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread the board,  
And stood behind, and waited on the three.  
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it down :  
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his veins,  
Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky hall ;  
Then suddenly address the hoary Earl :

“ Fair Host and Earl, I pray your courtesy ;  
This sparrow-hawk, what is he ? tell me of him.  
His name ? but no, good faith, I will not have it :  
For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason's hand, then have I sworn  
From his own lips to have it—I am Geraint  
Of Devon—for this morning when the Queen  
Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
Indignant to the Queen ; and then I swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and have it of him.  
And all unarm'd I rode, and thought to find  
Arms in your town, where all the men are mad ;  
They take the rustic murmur of their bourg  
For the great wave that echoes round the world ;



They would not hear me speak : but if you know  
Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have sworn  
That I will break his pride and learn his name,  
Avenging this great insult done the Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol, " Art thou he indeed,  
Geraint, a name far sounded among men  
For noble deeds? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt you were somewhat, yea, and by your state  
And presence might have guess'd you one of those  
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery ;  
For this dear child hath often heard me praise  
Your feats of arms, and often when I paused  
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear ;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong :  
Oh, never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden ; first Limours,  
A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,  
Drunk even when he woo'd ; and be he dead  
I know not, but he pass'd to the wild land.  
The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,  
My curse, my nephew—I will not let his name  
Slip from my lips if I can help it—he,  
When I that knew him fierce and turbulent  
Refused her to him, then his pride awoke ;  
And since the proud man often is the mean,  
He sow'd a slander in the common ear,  
Affirming that his father left him gold,  
And in my charge, which was not render'd to him ;  
Brib'd with large promises the men who serv'd  
About my person, the more easily  
Because my means were somewhat broken into  
Through open doors and hospitality ;



Rais'd my own town against me in the night  
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house ;  
From mine own earldom foully ousted me ;  
Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
For truly there are those who love me yet ;  
And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,  
But that his pride too much despises me :  
And I myself sometimes despise myself ;  
For I have let men be, and have their way ;  
Am much too gentle, have not used my power :  
Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish ; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently."

" Well said, true heart," replied Geraint, " but arms,  
That if, as I suppose, your nephew fights  
In next day's tourney I may break his pride."

And Yniol answer'd, " Arms, indeed, but old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at your asking, yours.  
But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be there.  
Two forks are fix'd into the meadow ground,  
And over these is laid a silver wand,  
And over that is placed a sparrow-hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
And this, what knight soever be in field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,  
Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
And toppling over all antagonism

Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-hawk.  
But you, that have no lady, cannot fight."

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,  
Leaning a little toward him, "Your leave!  
Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never saw,  
Though having seen all beauties of our time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain  
Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,  
As I will make her truly my true wife."

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.  
And looking round he saw not Enid there  
(Who hearing her own name had slipt away),  
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
And fondling all her hand in his he said,  
"Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the Prince."

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and she  
With frequent smile and nod departing found,  
Half-disarray'd as to her rest, the girl;  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and then  
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
And told her all their converse in the hall,  
Proving her heart: but never light and shade  
Coursed one another more on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale  
Across the face of Enid hearing her;  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,



Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast ;  
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it ;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness ;  
And when the pale and bloodless east began  
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved  
Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,  
And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint  
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could move  
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but through these  
Princelike his bearing shone ; and errant knights  
And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.  
And there they fix'd the forks into the ground,  
And over these they placed a silver wand,  
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk.  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,  
Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,  
" Advance and take as fairest of the fair,  
For I these two years past have won it for thee,  
The prize of beauty." Loudly spake the Prince,  
" Forbear ; there is a worthier," and the knight,  
With some surprise and thrice as much disdain,  
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face  
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,  
So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
" Do battle for it then," no more ; and thrice  
They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.



Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each  
So often and with such blows, that all the crowd  
Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls  
There came a clapping as of phantom hands.  
So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still  
The dew of their great labour, and the blood  
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.  
But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,  
"Remember that great insult done the Queen,"  
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,  
And crack'd the helmet through, and bit the bone,  
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,  
And said, "Thy name?" To whom the fallen man  
Made answer, groaning, "Edyrn, son of Nudd!  
Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
My pride is broken: men have seen my fall."  
"Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied Geraint,  
"These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.  
First, thou thyself, thy lady, and thy dwarf,  
Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being there,  
Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,  
And shalt abide her judgment on it; next,  
Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.  
These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die."  
And Edyrn answer'd, "These things will I do,  
For I have never yet been overthrown,  
And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride  
Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!"  
And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,  
And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
And being young, he changed himself, and grew  
To hate the sin that seem'd so like his own  
Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and fell at last  
In the great battle fighting for the King.

But when the third day from the hunting-morn  
Made a low splendour in the world, and wings

Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
With her fair head in the dim yellow light,  
Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
Woke and bethought her of her promise given  
No later than last eve to Prince Geraint—  
So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
He would not leave her, till her promise given—  
To ride with him this morning to the court,  
And there be made known to the stately Queen,  
And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.  
For as a leaf in mid-November is  
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
The dress that now she look'd on to the dress  
She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
And still she look'd, and still the terror grew  
Of that strange bright and dreadful thing, a court,  
All staring at her in her faded silk ;  
And softly to her own sweet heart she said :

“ This noble prince who won our earldom back,  
So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit him !  
Would he could tarry with us here awhile,  
But being so beholden to the Prince,  
It were but little grace in any of us,  
Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
To seek a second favour at his hands.  
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,  
Far liefer than so much discredit him.”

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a costly gift  
Of her good mother, given her on the night  
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house,



And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :  
For while the mother show'd it, and the two  
Were turning and admiring it, the work  
To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled  
With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought them bread :  
And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,  
And placed them in this ruin ; and she wish'd  
The Prince had found her in her ancient home ;  
Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she knew ;  
And last bethought her how she used to watch,  
Near that old home, a pool of golden carp ;  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless  
Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool ;  
And half asleep she made comparison  
Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again ;  
And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool ;  
But this was in the garden of a king ;  
And though she lay dark in the pool, she knew  
That all was bright ; that all about were birds  
Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd  
Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;  
And lords and ladies of the high court went  
In silver tissue talking things of state ;  
And children of the King in cloth of gold  
Glanced at the doors or gamboll'd down the walks ;  
And while she thought, " They will not see me," came  
A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,  
And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, " If we have fish at all  
Let them be gold ; and charge the gardeners now  
To pick the faded creature from the pool.



And cast it on the mixen that it die."  
And therewithal one came and seized on her,  
And Enid started waking, with her heart  
All overshadow'd by the foolish dream,  
And lo ! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake ; and in her hand  
A suit of bright apparel, which she laid  
Flat on the couch, and spoke exultingly :

" See here, my child, how fresh the colours look,  
How fast they hold like colours of a shell  
That keeps the wear and polish of the wave !  
Why not ? It never yet was worn, I trow :  
Look on it, child, and tell me if you know it."

And Enid look'd, but all confus'd at first,  
Could scarce divide it from her foolish dream ;  
Then suddenly she knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer'd, " Yea, I know it ; your good gift,  
So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;  
Your own good gift ! " " Yea, surely," said the dame,  
" And gladly given again this happy morn.  
For when the jousts were ended yesterday,  
Went Yniol through the town, and everywhere  
He found the sack and plunder of our house  
All scatter'd through the houses of the town ;  
And gave command that all which once was ours  
Should now be ours again : and yester-eve,  
While you were talking sweetly with your Prince,  
Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
For love or fear, or seeking favour of us,  
Because we have our earldom back again.  
And yester-eve I would not tell you of it,  
But kept it for a sweet surprise at morn.  
Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?  
For I myself unwillingly have worn  
My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,

And howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,  
And pastime both of hawk and hound, and all  
That appertains to noble maintenance.  
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house ;  
But since our fortune slipt from sun to shade,  
And all through that young traitor, cruel need  
Constrain'd us, but a better time has come ;  
So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride :  
For though you won the prize of fairest fair,  
And though I heard him call you fairest fair,  
Let never maiden think, however fair,  
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
And should some great court-lady say, the Prince  
Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,  
And like a madman brought her to the court,  
Then were you shamed, and, worse, might shame the Prince  
To whom we are beholden ; but I know,  
When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
That neither court nor country, though they sought  
Through all the provinces like those of old  
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her match."

Here ceased the kindly mother out of breath ;  
And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay ;  
Then, as the white and glittering star of morn  
Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by  
Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
And left her maiden couch, and robed herself,  
Help'd by the mother's careful hand and eye,  
Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown ;  
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and said  
She never yet had seen her half so fair ;  
And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,



Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers,  
And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar first  
Invaded Britain, "But we beat him back,  
As this great Prince invaded us, and we,  
Not beat him back, but welcomed him with joy.  
And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
For old am I, and rough the ways and wild ;  
But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
I see my princess as I see her now,  
Clothed with my gift, and gay among the gay."

But while the women thus rejoiced, Geraint  
Woke where he slept in the high hall, and call'd  
For Enid ; and when Yniol made report  
Of that good mother making Enid gay  
In such apparel as might well beseem  
His princess, or indeed the stately Queen,  
He answer'd : " Earl, entreat her by my love,  
Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
That she ride with me in her faded silk."  
Yniol with that hard message went ; it fell  
Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn :  
For Enid, all abash'd she knew not why,  
Dared not to glance at her good mother's face,  
But silently, in all obedience,  
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd gift,  
And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
More than Geraint to greet her thus attired ;  
And glancing all at once as keenly at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,  
But rested with her sweet face satisfied ;  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly said :



“O my new mother, be not wroth or grieved  
At your new son, for my petition to her.  
When late I left Caerleon, our great Queen,  
In words whose echo lasts, they were so sweet,  
Made promise, that whatever bride I brought,  
Herself would clothe her like the sun in Heaven.  
Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hold,  
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I vow'd that could I gain her, our kind Queen,  
No hand but hers, should make your Enid burst  
Sunlike from cloud—and likewise thought, perhaps,  
That service done so graciously would bind  
The two together; for I wish the two  
To love each other: how should Enid find  
A nobler friend? Another thought I had;  
I came among you here so suddenly,  
That though her gentle presence at the lists  
Might well have served for proof that I was loved,  
I doubted whether filial tenderness,  
Or easy nature, did not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal;  
Or whether some false sense in her own self  
Of my contrasting brightness, overbore  
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall;  
And such a sense might make her long for court  
And all its dangerous glories: and I thought,  
That could I somehow prove such force in her  
Link'd with such love for me, that at a word  
(No reason given her) she could cast aside  
A splendour dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer; or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted custom; then I felt  
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,  
Fix'd on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,  
A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross

Between us. Grant me pardon for my thoughts ;  
And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your costly gift  
Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her knees,  
Who knows? another gift of the high God,  
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you thanks."

He spoke : the mother smil'd, but half in tears,  
Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her in it,  
And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd  
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,  
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea ;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,  
By the flat meadow, till she saw them come ;  
And then descending met them at the gates,  
Embrac'd her with all welcome as a friend,  
And did her honour as the Prince's bride,  
And cloth'd her for her bridals like the sun ;  
And all that week was old Caerleon gay,  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,  
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide.  
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,  
" Put on your worst and meanest dress," she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.



O purblind race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true ;  
Here, through the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen !

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth  
That morning, when they both had got to horse,  
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,  
Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce  
Upon a head so dear, in thunder said :  
“ Not at my side. I charge you ride before,  
Ever a good way on before ; and this  
I charge you, on your duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word ! ” and Enid was aghast ;  
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,  
When crying out, “ Effeminate as I am,  
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron ; ” he loosed a mighty purse,  
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.  
So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown  
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire  
Chafing his shoulder : then he cried again,  
“ To the wilds ! ” and Enid leading down the tracks  
Through which he bade her lead him on, they pass'd  
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,  
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,  
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode :  
Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd soon :  
A stranger meeting them had surely thought,  
They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,  
That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.



For he was ever saying to himself,  
“O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
To compass her with sweet observances,  
To dress her beautifully and keep her true—”  
And there he broke the sentence in his heart  
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it, when his passion masters him.  
And she was ever praying the sweet heavens  
To save her dear lord whole from any wound.  
And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
Which made him look so cloudy and so cold ;  
Till the great plover's human whistle amazed  
Her heart, and glancing round the waste she fear'd  
In every wavering brake an ambuscade.  
Then thought again, “If there be such in me,  
I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me of it.”

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,  
Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock  
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all ;  
And heard one crying to his fellow, “Look,  
Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,  
Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound ;  
Come, we will slay him and will have his horse  
And armour, and his damsel shall be ours.”

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and said :  
“I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their caitiff talk ;  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
Than that my lord should suffer loss or shame.”

Then she went back some paces of return,  
Met his full frown timidly firm, and said :

“ My lord, I saw three bandits by the rock  
Waiting to fall on you, and heard them boast  
That they would slay you, and possess your horse  
And armour, and your damsel should be theirs.”

He made a wrathful answer : “ Did I wish  
Your silence or your warning? one command  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
And thus you keep it ! Well then, look—for now,  
Whether you wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigour is not lost.”

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince Geraint  
Drave the long spear a cubit through his breast  
And out beyond ; and then against his brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had broken on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd the twain  
Or slew them, and dismounting like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying him,  
Stript from the three dead wolves of woman born  
The three gay suits of armour which they wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits  
Of armour on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, “ Drive them on  
Before you ; ” and she drove them through the waste.

He followed nearer : ruth began to work  
Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience  
Driving them on : he fain had spoken to her,  
And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath



And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all within ;  
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her dead,  
Than to cry " Halt," and to her own bright face  
Accuse her of the least immodesty.  
And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the more  
That she *could* speak whom his own ear had heard  
Call herself false ; and suffering thus he made  
Minutes an age : but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly arm'd,  
Whereof one seem'd far larger than her lord,  
And shook her pulses, crying, " Look, a prize !  
Three horses and three goodly suits of arms,  
And all in charge of whom ? a girl : set on."  
" Nay," said the second, " yonder comes a knight."  
The third, " A craven ; how he hangs his head !"  
The giant answer'd merrily, " Yea, but one ?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said,  
" I will abide the coming of my lord,  
And I will tell him all their villainy.  
My lord is weary with the fight before,  
And they will fall upon him unawares.  
I needs must disobey him for his good ;  
How should I dare obey him to his harm ?  
Needs must I speak, and though he kill me for it,  
I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said to him  
With timid firmness, " Have I leave to speak ?"  
He said, " You take it, speaking," and she spoke.



“ There lurk three villains yonder in the wood,  
And each of them is wholly arm'd, and one  
Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they say  
That they will fall upon you while you pass.”

To which he flung a wrathful answer back :  
“ And if there were an hundred in the wood,  
And every man were larger-limb'd than I,  
And all at once should sally out upon me,  
I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
As you that not obey me. Stand aside,  
And if I fall, cleave to the better man.”

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe  
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.  
And he she dreaded most bare down upon him.  
Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ; but Geraint's,  
A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
Struck through the bulky bandit's corselet home,  
And then brake short, and down his enemy roll'd,  
And there lay still ; as he that tells the tale  
Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
That had a sapling growing on it, slip  
From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the beach,  
And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew :  
So lay the man transfix'd. His craven pair  
Of comrades making slower at the Prince,  
When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood ;  
On whom the victor, to confound them more,  
Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ; for as one,  
That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,  
All through the crash of the near cataract hears  
The drumming thunder of the huger fall  
At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear  
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
And foemen scared, like that false pair who turn'd

Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd the lance  
That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves  
Their three gay suits of armour, each from each,  
And bound them on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, "Drive them on  
Before you," and she drove them through the wood.

He follow'd nearer still : the pain she had  
To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,  
Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,  
Together, served a little to disedge  
The sharpness of that pain about her heart ;  
And they themselves, like creatures gently born  
But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light ears, and felt  
Her low firm voice and tender government.

So through the green gloom of the wood they pass'd,  
And issuing under open heavens beheld  
A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased  
In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it :  
And down a rocky pathway from the place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his hand  
Bare victual for the mowers : and Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale :  
Then, moving downward to the meadow ground,  
He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him, said,  
"Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so faint."  
"Yea, willingly," replied the youth ; "and you,  
My lord, eat also, though the fare is coarse,  
And only meet for mowers ;" then set down  
His basket, and dismounting on the sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate themselves.



And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure ; but Geraint  
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was amazed ;  
And " Boy," said he, " I have eaten all, but take  
A horse and arms for guerdon ; choose the best."  
He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
" My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold."  
" Ye will be all the wealthier," cried the Prince.  
" I take it as free gift, then," said the boy,  
" Not guerdon ; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return, and fetch  
Fresh victual for these mowers of our Earl ;  
For these are his, and all the field is his,  
And I myself am his ; and I will tell him  
How great a man you are : he loves to know  
When men of mark are in his territory ;  
And he will have you to his palace here,  
And serve you costlier than with mowers' fare."

Then said Geraint, " I wish no better fare :  
I never ate with angrier appetite  
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.  
And into no Earl's palace will I go.  
I know, God knows, too much of palaces !  
And if he want me, let him come to me.  
But hire us some fair chamber for the night,  
And stalling for the horses, and return  
With victual for these men, and let us know."

" Yea, my kind lord," said the glad youth, and went,  
Held his head high, and thought himself a knight,  
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were left alone.

But when the Prince had brought his errant eyes  
Home from the rock, sideways he let them glance



At Enid, where she droopt : his own false doom,  
That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he sigh'd ;  
Then with another humorous ruth remark'd  
The lusty mowers labouring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning scythe,  
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,  
And all the windy clamour of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass  
There growing longest by the meadow's edge,  
And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now beneath her marriage ring,  
Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd  
And told them of a chamber, and they went ;  
Where, after saying to her, " If you will,  
Call for the woman of the house," to which  
She answer'd, " Thanks, my lord ;" the two remain'd  
Apart by all the chamber's width, and mute  
As creatures voiceless through the fault of birth,  
Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
Painted, who stare at open space, nor glance  
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along the street,  
And heel against the pavement echoing, burst  
Their drowse ; and either started while the door,  
Push'd from without, drave backward to the wall,  
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place, Limours.  
He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt hand,  
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.

Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer  
To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously  
According to his fashion, bad the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honour of their Earl ;  
“ And care not for the cost ; the cost is mine.”

And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours  
Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,  
And made it of two colours ; for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled him,  
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets ; thus he moved the Prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd Limours,  
“ Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak  
To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely ? ” “ My free leave,” he said ;  
“ Get her to speak : she does not speak to me.”  
Then rose Limours, and looking at his feet,  
Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,  
Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly :

“ Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
Enid, my early and my only love,  
Enid, the loss of whom has turn'd me wild—  
What chance is this ? how is it I see you here ?  
Ye are in my power at last, are in my power.  
Yet fear me not : I call mine own self wild,  
But keep a touch of sweet civility  
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
I thought, but that your father came between,  
In former days you saw me favourably.  
And if it were so, do not keep it back :  
Make me a little happier : let me know it :  
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost ?



Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.  
And, Enid, you and he, I see it with joy,  
You sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
You come with no attendance, page or maid,  
To serve you—does he love you as of old?  
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
Though men may bicker with the things they love,  
They would not make them laughable in all eyes,  
Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,  
A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks  
Your story, that this man loves you no more.  
Your beauty is no beauty to him now:  
A common chance—right well I know it—pall'd—  
For I know men: nor will you win him back,  
For the man's love once gone never returns.  
But here is one who loves you as of old;  
With more exceeding passion than of old:  
Good, speak the word: my followers ring him round:  
He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up:  
They understand: no; I do not mean blood:  
Nor need you look so scared at what I say:  
My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
No stronger than a wall: there is the keep;  
He shall not cross us more; speak but the word:  
Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me  
The one true lover which you ever had,  
I will make use of all the power I have.  
O pardon me! the madness of that hour,  
When first I parted from you, moves me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own voice  
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd his eyes,  
Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast;  
And answer'd with such craft as women use,  
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
That breaks upon them perilously, and said:



“ Earl, if you love me as in former years,  
And do not practise on me, come with morn,  
And snatch me from him as by violence ;  
Leave me to-night : I am weary to the death.”

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume  
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous Earl,  
And the stout Prince bade him a loud good-night.  
He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never lov'd a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,  
Debating his command of silence given,  
And that she now perforce must violate it,  
Held commune with herself, and while she held  
He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly pleas'd  
To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and equally.  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heap'd  
The pieces of his armour in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need ;  
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoil'd  
By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and then  
Went slipping down horrible precipices,  
And strongly striking out her limbs awoke ;  
Then thought she heard the wild Earl at the door,  
With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning her ;  
Which was the red cock shouting to the light,  
As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world,  
And glimmer'd on his armour in the room.  
And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares : jangling, the casque  
Fell, and he started up and stared at her.

Then breaking his command of silence given,  
She told him all that Earl Limours had said,  
Except the passage that he lov'd her not ;  
Nor left untold the craft herself had used ;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and seem'd  
So justified by that necessity,  
That though he thought "was it for him she wept  
In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful groan,  
Saying, "Your sweet faces make good fellows fools  
And traitors. Call the host, and bid him bring  
Charger and palfrey." So she glided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the house,  
And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd ;  
Then tending her rough lord, though all unask'd,  
In silence, did him service as a squire ;  
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and cried,  
"Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he learnt it, "Take  
Five horses and their armours;" and the host  
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
"My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one!"  
"You will be all the wealthier," said the Prince ;  
And then to Enid, "Forward! and to-day  
I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever you may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (though I count it of small use  
To charge you), that you speak not but obey."

And Enid answer'd, "Yea, my lord, I know  
Your wish, and would obey; but riding first,  
I hear the violent threats you do not hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see:  
Then not to give you warning, that seems hard--  
Almost beyond me; yet I would obey."

"Yea, so," said he, "do it: be not too wise;  
Seeing that you are wedded to a man,



Not quite mismated with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and yours,  
With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams."

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly at her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil ;  
And that within her, which a wanton fool  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.  
And Geraint look'd, and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,  
Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Buli,  
Went Enid with her sullen follower on.  
Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride  
More near by many a rood than yestermorn,  
It well-nigh made her cheerful ; till Geraint  
Waving an angry hand as who should say,  
" You watch me," sadden'd all her heart again.  
But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof  
Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw  
Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word,  
Was in a manner pleas'd, and turning, stood.  
And in the moment after, wild Limours,  
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud  
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,  
Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,



Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore  
Down by the length of lance and arm beyond  
The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,  
And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Adown the crystal dikes at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,  
But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower ;  
So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,  
And left him lying in the public way :  
So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smil'd Geraint,  
Who saw the chargers of the two that fell  
Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,  
Mix'd with the flyers. " Horse and man," he said,  
" All of one mind and all right honest friends !  
Not a hoof left : and I methinks till now  
Was honest—paid with horses and with arms.  
I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg ;  
And so what say you—shall we strip him there  
Your lover ? has your palfrey heart enough  
To bear his armour ? shall we fast, or dine ?  
No ?—then do you, being right honest, pray  
That we may meet the horsemen of Earl Doorm ;  
I too would still be honest." Thus he said ;  
And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
And answering not one word, she led the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
Falls in a far land and he knows it not,

But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
So pains him that he sickens nigh to death ;  
So fared it with Geraint, who being prick'd  
In combat with the follower of Limours,  
Bled underneath his armour secretly,  
And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,  
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet wagg'd  
And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
Though happily down on a bank of grass,  
The Prince, without a word, from his horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his arms,  
Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,  
And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
Had bared her forehead to the blistering sun,  
And swath'd the hurt that drain'd her dear lord's life  
Then after all was done that hand could do,  
She rested, and her desolation came  
Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many pass'd, but none regarded her,  
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,  
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
Was cared as much for as a summer shower.  
One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him ;  
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl ;  
Half-whistling and half-singing a coarse song,  
He drove the dust against her veiless eyes .  
Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
The long way smoke beneath him in his fear ;



At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,  
And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,  
While the great charger stood, griev'd like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorm,  
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,  
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
Came riding with a hundred lances up :  
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
Cried out with a big voice, " What, is he dead ? "  
" No, no, not dead ! " she answer'd in all haste.  
" Would some of your kind people take him up,  
And bear him hence out of this cruel sun ?  
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead. "

Then said Earl Doorm : " Well, if he be not dead,  
Why wail you for him thus ? you seem a child.  
And be he dead, I count you for a fool ;  
Your wailing will not quicken him : dead or not,  
You mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
Yet, since the face *is* comely—some of you,  
Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall :  
An if he live, we will have him of our band ;  
And if he die, why, earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one. "

He spake, and pass'd away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanc'd,  
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone  
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling : so the ruffians growl'd,  
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,  
Their chance of booty from the morning's raid,  
Yet rais'd and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays out



For those that might be wounded ; laid him on it  
All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm  
(His gentle charger following him unled),  
And cast him and the bier in which he lay  
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as before,  
And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,  
And their own Earl, and their own souls, and her.  
They might as well have blest her : she was deaf  
To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,  
There in the naked hall, propping his head,  
And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him.  
And at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping his head,  
And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him ;  
And felt the warm tears falling on his face ;  
And said to his own heart, " She weeps for me : "  
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,  
That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
And say to his own heart, " She weeps for me."

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.  
His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise :  
Each hurling down a heap of things that rang  
Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,  
And doff'd his helm : and then there flutter'd in,  
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen : and Earl Doorm  
Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,  
And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.  
And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves.

And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh :  
And none spake word, but all sat down at once,  
And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
Feeding like horses when you hear them feed ;  
Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.  
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,  
He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found  
A damsel drooping in a corner of it.  
Then he remember'd her, and how she wept ;  
And out of her there came a power upon him,  
And rising on the sudden he said, " Eat !  
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.  
God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.  
Eat ! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,  
For were I dead, who is it would weep for me ?  
Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath  
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.  
And so there lived some colour in your cheek,  
There is not one among my gentlewomen  
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.  
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,  
And I will do the thing I have not done,  
For you shall share my earldom with me, girl,  
And we will live like two birds in one nest,  
And I will fetch you forage from all fields,  
For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke : the brawny spearman let his cheek  
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and turning stared ;  
While some, whose souls the old serpent long had drawn  
Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd leaf  
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's ear  
What shall not be recorded—women they,  
Women, or what had been those gracious things,  
But now desired the humbling of their best,  
Yea, would have help'd him to it : and all at once



They hated her, who took no thought of them,  
But answer'd in low voice, her meek head yet  
Drooping, "I pray you of your courtesy,  
He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard her speak,  
But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
With what himself had done so graciously,  
Assum'd that she had thank'd him, adding, "Yea,  
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine."

She answer'd meekly, "How should I be glad  
Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
Until my lord arise and look upon me?"

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her talk,  
As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing; suddenly seiz'd on her,  
And bare her by main violence to the board,  
And thrust the dish before her, crying, "Eat."

"No, no," said Enid, vex'd, "I will not eat  
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me." "Drink, then," he answer'd. "Here!"  
(And fill'd a horn with wine and held it to her.)  
"Lo! I myself, when flush'd with fight, or hot,  
God's curse, with anger—often I myself,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce can eat:  
Drink therefore, and the wine will change your will."

"Not so," she cried, "by Heaven, I will not drink  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,  
I will not look at wine until I die."

At this he turn'd all red and paced his hall,  
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper lip,



And coming up close to her, said at last :  
“ Girl, for I see you scorn my courtesies,  
Take warning : yonder man is surely dead ;  
And I compel ail creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink ? And wherefore wail for one  
Who put your beauty to this flout and scorn  
By dressing it in rags ? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how you butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus : cross me no more.  
At least put off to please me this poor gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's weed :  
I love that beauty should go beautifully :  
For see you not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one  
Who loves that beauty should go beautifully ?  
Rise therefore ; robe yourself in this : obey.”

He spoke, and one among his gentlewomen  
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down the front  
With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung : so thickly shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be mov'd  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,  
And now their hour has come ; and Enid said :

“ In this poor gown my dear lord found me first,  
And lov'd me serving in my father's hall :  
In this poor gown I rode with him to court,  
And there the Queen array'd me like the sun :  
In this poor gown he bad me clothe myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal quest

Of honour, where no honour can be gain'd :  
And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough :  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be :  
I never loved, can never love but him :  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
He being as he is, to let me be."

Then strode the brute Earl up and down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his teeth ;  
Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood  
Crying, " I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you ;  
Take my salute," unknighly with flat hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, " He had not dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,"  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming through the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword  
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it  
Shore through the swarthy neck, and like a ball  
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.  
And all the men and women in the hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said :

" Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man-  
Done you more wrong : we both have undergone



That trouble which has left me thrice your own :  
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
And here I lay this penance on myself,  
Not, though mine own ears heard you yestermorn—  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no true wife.  
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it :  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart :  
She only pray'd him, " Fly, they will return  
And slay you ; fly, your charger is without,  
My palfrey lost." " Then, Enid, shall you ride  
Behind me." " Yea," said Enid, " let us go."  
And moving out they found the stately horse,  
Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and stoop'd  
With a low whinny toward the pair : and she  
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the horse  
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his foot  
She set her own and climb'd ; he turn'd his face  
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her arms  
About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
Than liv'd through her, who in that perilous hour  
Put hand to hand beneath her husband's heart,  
And felt him hers again : she did not weep,  
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist  
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green  
Before the useful trouble of the rain :



Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes  
As not to see before them on the path,  
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his lance  
In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.  
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,  
She, with her mind all full of what had chanc'd,  
Shriek'd to the stranger, "Slay not a dead man!"  
"The voice of Enid," said the knight; but she,  
Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
Was mov'd so much the more, and shriek'd again,  
"O cousin, slay not him who gave you life."  
And Edyrn, moving frankly forward, spake:  
"My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love;  
I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm;  
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,  
Who love you, Prince, with something of the love  
Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens us.  
For once, when I was up so high in pride  
That I was halfway down the slope to Hell,  
By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table Round,  
And since I knew this Earl, when I myself  
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
I come the mouthpiece of our King to Doorm  
(The King is close behind me), bidding him  
Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
Submit, and hear the judgment of the King."

"He hears the judgment of the King of kings,"  
Cried the wan Prince; "and lo, the powers of Doorm  
Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the field,  
Where, huddl'd here and there on mound and knoll,  
Were men and women staring and aghast,  
While some yet fled; and then he plainlier told  
How the huge Earl lay slain within his hall.  
But when the knight besought him, "Follow me,

Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own ear  
Speak what has chanc'd ; you surely have endur'd  
Strange chances here alone ;" that other flush'd,  
And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
Fearing the mild face of the blameless King,  
And after madness acted question ask'd :  
Till Edyrn crying, " If you will not go  
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,"  
" Enough," he said, " I follow," and they went.  
But Enid in their going had two fears,  
One from the bandit scatter'd in the field,  
And one from Edyrn. Every now and then,  
When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her side,  
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken, men may fear  
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said :

" Fair and dear cousin, you that most had cause  
To fear me, fear no longer, I am chang'd.  
Yourself were first the blameless cause to make  
My nature's prideful sparkle in the blood  
Break into furious flame ; being repuls'd  
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and wrought  
Until I overturn'd him ; then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)  
My haughty jousts, and took a paramour ;  
Did her mock honour as the fairest fair,  
And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride that I believ'd myself  
Unconquerable, for I was well-nigh mad :  
And, but for my main purpose in these jousts,  
I should have slain your father, seized yourself.  
I lived in hope that sometime you would come  
To these my lists with him whom best you lov'd ;  
And there, poor cousin, with your meek blue eyes,  
The truest eyes that ever answer'd Heaven,  
Behold me overturn and trample on him.



Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray'd to me,  
I should not less have kill'd him. And you came,—  
But once you came,—and with your own true eyes  
Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one  
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow  
My proud self, and my purpose three years old,  
And set his foot upon me, and give me life.  
There was I broken down ; there was I saved :  
Though thence I rode all-sham'd, hating the life  
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid upon me  
Was but to rest awhile within her court ;  
Where first as sullen as a beast new-cag'd,  
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known, I found,  
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace  
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's indeed :  
And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high saint,  
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood, makes a man.  
And you were often there about the Queen,  
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw ;  
Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was chang'd ;  
And fear not, cousin ; I am chang'd indeed."

He spoke, and Enid easily believ'd,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend or foe,  
There most in those who most have done them ill.  
And when they reach'd the camp, the King himself  
Advanc'd to greet them, and beholding her

Though pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a word,  
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held  
In converse for a little, and return'd,  
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from horse,  
And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-like,  
And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
And glancing for a minute, till he saw her  
Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and said :

“ Prince, when of late you pray'd me for my leave  
To move to your own land, and there defend  
Your marches, I was prick'd with some reproof.  
As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,  
By having look'd too much through alien eyes,  
And wrought too long with delegated hands,  
Not used mine own : but now behold me come  
To cleanse this common sewer of all my realm,  
With Edyrn and with others : have you look'd  
At Edyrn ? have you seen how nobly chang'd ?  
This work of his is great and wonderful.  
His very face with change of heart is chang'd.  
The world will not believe a man repents ;  
And this wise world of ours is mainly right.  
Full seldom *doth* a man repent, or use  
Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch  
Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
And make all clean, and plant himself afresh.  
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart  
As I will weed this land before I go.  
I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,  
Not rashly, but have prov'd him every way  
One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
Sanest and most obedient ; and indeed  
This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself  
After a life of violence, seems to me  
A thousand-fold more great and wonderful  
Than if some knight of mine, risking his life.



My subject with my subjects under him,  
Should make an onslaught single on a realm  
Of robbers, though he slew them one by one,  
And were himself nigh wounded to the death.

So spake the King ; low bow'd the Prince, and felt  
His work was neither great nor wonderful,  
And pass'd to Enid's tent ; and thither came  
The King's own leech to look into his hurt ;  
And Enid tended on him there ; and there  
Her constant motion round him, and the breath  
Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,  
Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
As the south-west that blowing Bala lake  
Fills all the sacred Dee. So pass'd the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,  
The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes  
On whom his father Uther left in charge  
Long since, to guard the justice of the King :  
He look'd, and found them wanting ; and as now  
Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills  
To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,  
He rooted out the slothful officer  
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,  
And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men  
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleans'd the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they pass'd  
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
There the great Queen once more embrac'd her friend,  
And cloth'd her in apparel like the day.  
And though Geraint could never take again

That comfort from their converse which he took  
Before the Queen's fair name was breath'd upon,  
He rested well content that all was well.  
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them to the shores  
Of Severn, and they pass'd to their own land.  
And there he kept the justice of the King  
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died :  
And being ever foremost in the chase,  
And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.  
But Enid, whom her ladies lov'd to call  
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
Enid the Good ; and in their halls arose  
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
Of times to be ; nor did he doubt her more,  
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd  
A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

## VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds were still,  
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old  
It look'd a tower of ruin'd masonwork,  
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court.  
She hated all the knights, and heard in thought  
Their lavish comment when her name was nam'd.  
For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
Vex'd at a rumour rife about the Queen,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,



Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy mood  
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who priz'd him more  
Than who should prize him most ; at which the King  
Had gaz'd upon her blankly and gone by.  
But one had watch'd, and had not held his peace :  
It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the blameless King.  
And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all those times,  
Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships, and halls,  
Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens ;  
The people call'd him Wizard ; whom at first  
She play'd about with slight and sprightly talk,  
And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd points  
Of slander, glancing here and grazing there ;  
And yielding to his kindlier moods, the Seer  
Would watch her at her petulance, and play,  
Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable, and laugh  
As those that watch a kitten ; thus he grew  
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and she,  
Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,  
Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
Turn red or pale, would often when they met  
Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
With such a fix'd devotion that the old man,  
Though doubtful, felt the flattery, and at times  
Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
And half believe her true : for thus at times  
He waver'd ; but that other clung to him,  
Fix'd in her will, and so the seasons went.  
Then fell upon him a great melancholy ;  
And leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the beach ;  
There found a little boat, and stept into it ;  
And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her not.

She took the helm and he the sail ; the boat  
Drave with a sudden wind across the deeps,  
And touching Bréton sands, they disembark'd.  
And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.  
For Merlin once had told her of a charm,  
The which if any wrought on anyone  
With woven paces and with waving arms,  
The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie  
Clos'd in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
From which was no escape for evermore ;  
And none could find that man for evermore,  
Nor could he see but him who wrought the charm  
Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
And lost to life and use and name and fame.  
And Vivien ever sought to work the charm  
Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,  
As fancying that her glory would be great  
According to his greatness whom she quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd his feet,  
As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
A twist of gold was round her hair ; a robe  
Of samite without price, that more exprest  
Than hid her, clung about her lissome limbs,  
In colour like the satin-shining palm  
On sallows in the windy gleams of March :  
And while she kiss'd them, crying, " Trample me,  
Dear feet, that I have follow'd through the world,  
And I will pay you worship ; tread me down,  
And I will kiss you for it ; " he was mute :  
So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,  
As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall  
In silence : wherefore, when she lifted up  
A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
" O Merlin, do you love me ? " and again,



“ O Merlin, do you love me ? ” and once more,  
“ Great Master, do you love me ? ” he was mute.  
And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,  
Writhed toward him, slid up his knee and sat.  
Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
Together, curved an arm about his neck,  
Clung like a snake ; and letting her left hand  
Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
Made with her right a comb of pearl to part  
The lists of such a beard as youth gone out  
Had left in ashes : then he spoke and said,  
Not looking at her, “ Who are wise in love  
Love most, say least,” and Vivien answer’d quick,  
“ I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
In Arthur’s arras hall at Camelot :  
But neither eyes nor tongue—O stupid child !  
Yet you are wise who say it ; let me think  
Silence is wisdom : I am silent then,  
And ask no kiss ; ” then adding all at once,  
“ And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,” drew  
The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
And call’d herself a gilded summer fly  
Caught in a great old tyrant spider’s web,  
Who meant to eat her up in that wild wood  
Without one word. So Vivien call’d herself,  
But rather seem’d a lovely baleful star  
Veil’d in gray vapour ; till he sadly smil’d :  
“ To what request for what strange boon,” he said,  
“ Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
O Vivien, the preamble ? yet my thanks,  
For these have broken up my melancholy.”

And Vivien answer’d smiling saucily,  
“ What, O my Master, have you found your voice ?  
I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at last !  
But yesterday you never open’d lip,

Except indeed to drink : no cup had we :  
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the spring  
'That gather'd trickling dropwise from the cleft,  
And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling : then you drank,  
And knew no more, nor gave me one poor word ;  
Oh, no more thanks than might a goat have given,  
With no more sign of reverence than a beard.  
And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and you lay  
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those  
Deep meadows we had traversed, did you know  
That Vivien bathed your feet before her own ?  
And yet no thanks : and all through this wild wood  
And all this morning when I fondled you :  
Boon, yes, there was a boon, one not so strange—  
How had I wrong'd you ? surely you are wise,  
But such a silence is more wise than kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said :  
" Oh, did you never lie upon the shore,  
And watch the curl'd white of the coming wave  
Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks ?  
Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,  
Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,  
Had I for three days seen, ready to fall.  
And then I rose and fled from Arthur's court  
To break the mood. You follow'd me unask'd ;  
And when I look'd, and saw you following still,  
My mind involved yourself the nearest thing  
In that mind-mist : for shall I tell you truth ?  
*You* seem'd that wave about to break upon me  
And sweep me from my hold upon the world,  
My use and name and fame. Your pardon, child.  
Your pretty sports have brighten'd all again,  
And ask your boon, for boon I owe you thrice,  
Once for wrong done you by confusion, next



For thanks it seems till now neglected, last  
For these your dainty gambols : wherefore ask ;  
And take this boon so strange and not so strange."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully :  
" Oh, not so strange as my long asking it,  
Nor yet so strange as you yourself are strange,  
Nor half so strange as that dark mood of yours.  
I ever fear'd you were not wholly mine ;  
And see, yourself have own'd you did me wrong.  
The people call you prophet : let it be :  
But not of those that can expound themselves.  
Take Vivien for expounder ; she will call  
That three-days-long presageful gloom of yours  
No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
That makes you seem less noble than yourself,  
Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
Now ask'd again : for see you not, dear love,  
That such a mood as that, which lately gloom'd  
Your fancy when you saw me following you,  
Must make me fear still more you are not mine,  
Must make me yearn still more to prove you mine,  
And make me wish still more to learn this charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me ;  
The charm so taught will charm us both to rest.  
For, grant me some slight power upon your fate,  
I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
Should rest and let you rest, knowing you mine.  
And therefore be as great as you are named,  
Not muffled round with selfish reticence.  
How hard you look and how denyingly !  
Oh, if you think this wickedness in me,  
That I should prove it on you unawares,  
To make you lose your use and name and fame,  
That makes me most indignant ; then our bond  
Had best be loos'd for ever : but think or not,

By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean truth,  
As clean as blood of babes, as white as milk :  
O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
Ev'n in the jumbl'd rubbish of a dream,  
Have tript on such conjectural treachery—  
May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir hell  
Down, down, and close again, and nip me flat,  
If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,  
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am ;  
And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
The great proof of your love : because I think,  
However wise, you hardly know me yet."

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers and said,  
" I never was less wise, however wise,  
Too curious Vivien, though you talk of trust,  
Than when I told you first of such a charm.  
Yea, if you talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted when I told you that,  
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man  
Through woman the first hour ; for howsoe'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the world,  
In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised when I spell the lines,  
I call it—well, I will not call it vice :  
But since you name yourself the summer fly,  
I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness :  
But since I will not yield to give you power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will you never ask some other boon ?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted maid  
That ever bided tryst at village stile,



Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears :  
 " Nay, Master, be not wrathful with your maid,  
 Caress her : let her feel herself forgiven  
 Who feels no heart to ask another boon.  
 I think you hardly know the tender rhyme  
 Of ' trust me not at all or all in all.'  
 I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,  
 And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

' In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,  
 Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :  
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

' It is the little rift within the lute,  
 That by and by will make the music mute,  
 And ever widening slowly silence all ;

' The little rift within the lover's lute,  
 Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
 That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

' It is not worth the keeping : let it go :  
 But shall it ? answer, darling, answer, no.  
 And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O Master, do you love my tender rhyme ? "

And Merlin look'd and half believ'd her true,  
 So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
 So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her tears  
 Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower ;  
 And yet he answer'd half indignantly :

" Far other was the song that once I heard  
 By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit :  
 For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
 To chase a creature that was current then  
 In these wild woods, the hart with golden horns.  
 It was the time when first the question rose  
 About the founding of a Table Round,  
 That was to be, for love of God and men  
 And noble deeds, the flower of all the world.

And each incited each to noble deeds.  
 And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,  
 We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,  
 And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
 To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
 That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,  
 And should have done it; but the beauteous beast  
 Scared by the noise upstarted at our feet,  
 And like a silver shadow slipt away  
 Through the dim land; and all day long we rode  
 Through the dim land against a rushing wind,  
 That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,  
 And chas'd the flashes of his golden horns  
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
 That laughs at iron—as our warriors did—  
 Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry,  
 'Laugh, little well!' but touch it with a sword,  
 It buzzes wildly round the point; and there  
 We lost him: such a noble song was that.  
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet ryhme,  
 I felt as though you knew this cursèd charm,  
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully :  
 "Oh, mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
 And all through following you to this wild wood,  
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
 Lo now, what hearts have men! they never mount  
 As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
 And touching fame, howe'er you scorn my song,  
 Take one verse more—the lady speaks it—this :

' My name, once mine, now thine, is closelier mine,  
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were thine,  
 And shame, could shame be thine, that shame were mine.  
 So trust me not at all or all in all.'



“ Says she not well? and there is more—this rhyme  
Is like the fair pearl necklace of the Queen,  
That burst in dancing, and the pearls were spilt;  
Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept.  
But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other  
On her white neck. So is it with this rhyme:  
It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
And every minstrel sings it differently;  
Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls:  
‘ Man dreams of Fame while woman wakes to Love.’  
True! Love, though Love were of the grossest, carves  
A portion from the solid present, eats  
And uses, careless of the rest; but Fame,  
The Fame that follows death is nothing to us;  
And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,  
And counterchanged with darkness? you yourself  
Know well that Envy calls you Devil’s son,  
And since you seem the Master of all Art,  
They fain would make you Master of all vice.”

And Merlin lock’d his hand in hers and said,  
“ I once was looking for a magic weed,  
And found a fair young squire who sat alone,  
Had carv’d himself a knightly shield of wood,  
And then was painting on it fancied arms,  
Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun  
In dexter chief; the scroll ‘ I follow fame.’  
And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
And made a Gardener putting in a graff,  
With this for motto, ‘ Rather use than fame.’  
You should have seen him blush; but afterwards  
He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
For you, methinks you think you love me well;  
For me, I love you somewhat; rest: and Love  
Should have some rest and pleasure in himself,

Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
Of him you say you love : but Fame with men,  
Being but ampler means to serve mankind,  
Should have small rest or pleasure in herself,  
But work as vassal to the larger love,  
That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again  
Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon !  
What other ? for men sought to prove me vile,  
Because I wish'd to give them greater minds :  
And then did Envy call me Devil's son :  
The sick weak beast seeking to help herself  
By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought  
Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.  
Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,  
But when my name was lifted up, the storm  
Broke on the mountain, and I cared not for it.  
Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,  
Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,  
To one at least, who hath not children, vague,  
The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
I cared not for it : a single misty star.  
Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,  
I never gaz'd upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that star  
To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,  
Giving you power upon me through this charm,  
That you might play me falsely, having power,  
However well you think you love me now  
(As sons of kings loving in pupilage  
Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power),  
I rather dread the loss of use than fame ;  
If you—and not so much from wickedness,  
As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be.



To keep me all to your own self,—or else  
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,—  
Should try this charm on whom you say you love."

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath :  
"Have I not sworn? I am not trusted. Good!  
Well, hide it, hide it; I shall find it out;  
And being found take heed of Vivien.

A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger born  
Of your misfaith; and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine  
Without the full heart back may merit well  
Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,  
My daily wonder is, I love at all.

And as to woman's jealousy, oh, why not?  
Oh, to what end, except a jealous one,  
And one to make me jealous if I love,  
Was this fair charm invented by yourself?  
I well believe that all about this world  
You cage a buxom captive here and there,  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower  
From which is no escape for evermore."

Then the great Master merrily answered her :  
"Full many a love in loving youth was mine;  
I needed then no charm to keep them mine  
But youth and love; and that full heart of yours  
Whereof you prattle, may now assure you mine;  
So live uncharm'd. For those who wrought it first,  
The wrist is parted from the hand that wav'd,  
The feet unmortis'd from their ankle-bones  
Who paced it, ages back: but will you hear  
The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme?

"There liv'd a king in the most Eastern East  
Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.

A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty nameless isles ;  
And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,  
He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
And pushing his black craft among them all,  
He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her off,  
With loss of half his people arrow-slain ;  
A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,  
They said a light came from her when she mov'd :  
And since the pirate would not yield her up,  
The King impal'd him for his piracy ;  
Then made her Queen : but those isle-nurtur'd eyes  
Wag'd such unwilling though successful war  
On all the youth, they sicken'd ; councils thinn'd,  
And armies wan'd, for magnet-like she drew  
The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts ;  
And beasts themselves would worship ; camels knelt  
Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain back  
That carry kings in castles, bow'd black knees  
Of homage, ringing with their serpent hands,  
To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.  
What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
His horns of proclamation out through all  
The hundred under-kingdoms that he sway'd  
To find a wizard who might teach the King  
Some charm, which being wrought upon the Queen  
Might keep her all his own : to such a one  
He promis'd more than ever king has given,  
A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
A palace and a princess, all for him :  
But on all those who tried and fail'd, the King  
Pronounc'd a dismal sentence, meaning by it  
To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
Or like a king, not to be trifled with—  
Their heads should moulder on the city gates.



And many tried and fail'd, because the charm  
Of nature in her overbore their own :  
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the walls :  
And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
Hung like a cloud above the gateway towers.

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said :  
" I sit and gather honey ; yet methinks  
Your tongue has tript a little : ask yourself.  
The lady never made *unwilling* war  
With those fine eyes ; she had her pleasure in it,  
And made her good man jealous with good cause.  
And liv'd there neither dame nor damsel then  
Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as tame,  
I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair ?  
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
Or make her paler with a poison'd rose ?  
Well, those were not our days : but did they find  
A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to thee ? "

She ceas'd, and made her lithe arm round his neck  
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes  
Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's  
On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, " Nay, not like to me.  
At last they found—his foragers for charms—  
A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
Who liv'd alone in a great wild on grass ;  
Read but one book, and ever reading grew  
So grated down and filed away with thought,  
So lean his eyes were monstrous ; while the skin  
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and spine.  
And since he kept his mind on one sole aim,  
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted flesh,  
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting men

Became a crystal, and he saw them through it,  
And heard their voices talk behind the wall,  
And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
And forces ; often o'er the sun's bright eye  
Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
And lash'd it at the base with slanting storm ;  
Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,  
When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood roar'd,  
And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow, sunn'd  
The world to peace again : here was the man.  
And so by force they dragg'd him to the King.  
And then he taught the King to charm the Queen  
In suchwise that no man could see her more,  
Nor saw she save the King, who wrought the charm,  
Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
And lost all use of life : but when the King  
Made proffer of the league of golden mines,  
The province with a hundred miles of coast,  
The palace and the princess, that old man  
Went back to his old wild, and lived on grass,  
And vanish'd, and his book came down to me."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily :  
" You have the book : the charm is written in it :  
Good : take my counsel : let me know it at once :  
For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thirty-fold  
And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound  
As after furious battle turfs the slain  
On some wild down above the windy deep,  
I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm :  
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then ?"

And smiling as a master smiles at one  
That is not of his school, nor any school  
But that where blind and naked Ignorance



Delivers brawling judgments, unasham'd,  
On all things all day long, he answer'd her :

“ *You* read the book, my pretty Vivien !  
Oh ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
But every page having an ample marge,  
And every marge enclosing in the midst  
A square of text that looks a little blot,  
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas ;  
And every square of text an awful charm,  
Writ in a language that has long gone by.  
So long, that mountains have arisen since  
With cities on their flanks—*you* read the book ?  
And every margin scribbl'd, crost and cramm'd  
With comment, densest condensation, hard  
To mind and eye ; but the long sleepless nights  
Of my long life have made it easy to me.  
And none can read the text, not even I ;  
And none can read the comment but myself ;  
And in the comment did I find the charm.  
Oh, the results are simple ; a mere child  
Might use it to the harm of anyone,  
And never could undo it : ask no more :  
For though you should not prove it upon me,  
But keep that oath you swore, you might, perchance,  
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
And all because you dream they babble of you.”

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said :  
“ What dare the full-fed liars say of me ?  
*They* ride abroad redressing human wrongs !  
They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn !  
*They* bound to holy vows of chastity !  
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.  
But you are man, you well can understand  
The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.  
Not one of all the drove should touch me : swine ! ”

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words :  
" You breathe but accusation vast and vague,  
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If you know,  
Set up the charge you know, to stand or fall ! "

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully :  
" Oh ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him  
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife  
And two fair babes, and went to distant lands ;  
Was one year gone, and on returning found  
Not two but three ? there lay the reckling, one  
But one hour old ! What said the happy sire ?  
A seven-months' babe had been a truer gift.  
Those twelve sweet moons confus'd his fatherhood. "

Then answer'd Merlin, " Nay, I know the tale.  
Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame :  
Some cause had kept him sunder'd from his wife :  
One child they had : it liv'd with her : she died :  
His kinsman travelling on his own affair  
Was charg'd by Valence to bring home the child.  
He brought, not found it therefore : take the truth. "

" Oh ay, " said Vivien, " overtrue a tale.  
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,  
That ardent man ? ' to pluck the flower in season, '  
So says the song, ' I trow it is no treason. '  
O Master, shall we call him overquick  
To crop his own sweet rose before the hour ? "

And Merlin answer'd, " Overquick are you  
To catch a loathly plume fall'n from the wing  
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey  
Is man's good name : he never wrong'd his bride.  
I know the tale. An angry gust of wind  
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd  
And many-corridor'd complexities



Of Arthur's palace : then he found a door,  
And darkling felt the sculptur'd ornament  
That wreathen round it made it seem his own ;  
And wearied out made for the couch and slept,  
A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;  
And either slept, nor knew of other there ;  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely down,  
Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from her :  
But when the thing was blaz'd about the court,  
The brute world howling forc'd them into bonds,  
And as it chanc'd they are happy, being pure."

"Oh ay," said Vivien, "that were likely too.  
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,  
Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold ?  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead !"

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge,  
"A sober man is Percivale and pure ;  
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,  
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard ;  
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's mark ;  
And that he sinn'd is not believable ;  
For, look upon his face !—but if he sinn'd,  
The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,  
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :  
Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns  
Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have you more ?"

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath :  
" Oh ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend ?  
Traitor or true ? that commerce with the Queen,  
I ask you, is it clamour'd by the child,  
Or whisper'd in the corner ? do you know it ? "

To which he answer'd sadly, " Yea, I know it.  
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
To fetch her, and she took him for the King,  
So fix'd her fancy on him : let them be.  
But have you no one word of loyal praise  
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless man ? "

She answer'd with a low and chuckling laugh :  
" Man ! is he man at all, who knows and winks ?  
Sees what his fair bride is and does, and winks ?  
By which the good King means to blind himself,  
And blinds himself and all the Table Round  
To all the foulness that they work. Myself  
Could call him (were it not for womanhood)  
The pretty, popular name such manhood earns,  
Could call him the main cause of all their crime ;  
Yea, were he not crown'd King, coward, and fool. "

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing, said :  
" O true and tender ! O my liege and King !  
O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
Who wouldst against thine own eye-witness fain  
Have all men true and leal, all women pure ;  
How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible  
To things with every sense as false and foul  
As the poach'd filth that floods the middle street,  
Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame ! "

But Vivien, deeming Merlin overborne  
By instance, recommenc'd, and let her tongue  
Rage like a fire among the noblest names,



Polluting, and imputing her whole self,  
Defaming and defacing, till she left  
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd.  
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and made  
A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,  
And mutter'd in himself, "Tell *her* the charm !  
So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
To snare the next, and if she have it not  
So will she rail. What did the wanton say ?  
'Not mount as high ;' we scarce can sink as low :  
For men at most differ as Heaven and earth,  
But women, worst and best, as Heaven and Hell.  
I know the Table Round, my friends of old ;  
All brave, and many generous, and some chaste.  
I think she cloaks the wounds of loss with lies ;  
I do believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
She is so bitter : for fine plots may fail,  
Though harlots paint their talk as well as face  
With colours of the heart that are not theirs.  
I will not let her know : nine tithes of times  
Face-flatterers and backbiters are the same.  
And they, sweet soul, that most impute a crime  
Are pronest to it, and impute themselves,  
Wanting the mental range ; or low desire  
Not to feel lowest makes them level all ;  
Yea, they would pare the mountain to the plain,  
To leave an equal baseness ; and in this  
Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find  
Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
Not grieving that their greatest are so small,  
Inflate themselves with some insane delight,  
And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,  
And touching other worlds. I am weary of her."

He spoke in words part heard, in whispers part,  
Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
And many-winter'd fleece of throat and chin.  
But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his mood,  
And hearing "harlot" mutter'd twice or thrice,  
Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood  
Stiff as a viper frozen ; loathsome sight,  
How from the rosy lips of life and love  
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death !  
White was her cheek ; sharp breaths of anger puff'd  
Her fairy nostril out ; her hand half-clench'd  
Went faltering sideways downward to her belt,  
And feeling ; had she found a dagger there  
(For in a wink the false love turns to hate)  
She would have stabb'd him ; but she found it not :  
His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
Then her false voice made way, broken with sobs :

" O crueller than was ever told in tale,  
Or sung in song ! O vainly lavish'd love !  
O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,  
Or seeming shameful—for what shame in love,  
So love be true, and not as yours is—nothing  
Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust  
Who call'd her what he call'd her—all her crime,  
All—all—the wish to prove him wholly hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt her hands  
Together with a wailing shriek, and said :  
" Stabb'd through the heart's affections to the heart !  
Seeth'd like the kid in its own mother's milk !  
Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows !  
I thought that he was gentle, being great :  
O God, that I had lov'd a smaller man !  
I should have found in him a greater heart.



Oh, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
The knights, the court, the King, dark in your light,  
Who lov'd to make men darker than they are,  
Because of that high pleasure which I had  
To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
Of worship—I am answer'd, and henceforth  
The course of life that seem'd so flowery to me  
With you for guide and master, only you,  
Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,  
And ending in a ruin—nothing left,  
But into some low cave to crawl, and there,  
If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness."

She paus'd, she turn'd away, she hung her head,  
The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid  
Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm  
In silence, while his anger slowly died  
Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
For ease of heart, and half believ'd her true :  
Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
"Come from the storm," and having no reply,  
Gaz'd at the heaving shoulder, and the face  
Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame ;  
Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms,  
To sleek her ruff'd peace of mind, in vain.  
At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
The seeming-injur'd simple-hearted thing  
Came to her old perch back, and settl'd there.  
There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,  
Half-nestl'd at his heart, and since he saw  
The slow tear creep from her clos'd eyelid yet,  
About her, more in kindness than in love,  
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.  
But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,

Her arms upon her breast across, and stood,  
A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flush'd before him : then she said :

“ There must be now no passages of love  
Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore ;  
Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
What should be granted which your own gross heart  
Would reckon worth the taking ? I will go.  
In truth, but one thing now—better have died  
Thrice than have ask'd it once—could make me stay—  
That proof of trust—so often ask'd in vain !  
How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
I find with grief ! I might believe you then,  
Who knows ? once more. Lo ! what was once to me  
Mere matter of the fancy, now has grown  
The vast necessity of heart and life.  
Farewell ; think kindly of me, for I fear  
My fate or fault, omitting gayer youth  
For one so old, must be to love you still.  
But ere I leave you let me swear once more  
That if I schem'd against your peace in this,  
May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me, send  
One flash, that, missing all things else, may make  
My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.”

Scarce had she ceas'd, when out of heaven a bolt  
(For now the storm was close above them) struck,  
Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
With darted spikes and splinters of the wood  
The dark earth round. He rais'd his eyes and saw  
The tree that shone white-listed through the gloom.  
But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her oath,  
And dazzl'd by the livid-flickering fork,  
And deafen'd with the stammering cracks and claps  
That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
“ O Merlin, though you do not love me, save,



Yet save me ! " clung to him and hugg'd him close ;  
And call'd him dear protector in her fright,  
Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd him close.  
The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
Took gayer colours, like an opal warm'd.  
She blam'd herself for telling hearsay tales ;  
She shook from fear, and for her fault she wept  
Of petulancy ; she call'd him lord and liege,  
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate love  
Of her whole life ; and ever overhead  
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch  
Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
Above them ; and in change of glare and gloom  
Her eyes and neck glittering went and came ;  
Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,  
Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
Had left the ravag'd woodland yet once more  
To peace ; and what should not have been had been,  
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
And lost to life and use and name and fame.

Then crying, " I have made his glory mine,"  
And shrieking out, " O fool ! " the harlot leapt  
Adown the forest, and the thicket clos'd  
Behind her, and the forest echo'd " fool."

## ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,  
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
 High in her chamber up a tower to the east  
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot ;  
 Which first she plac'd where morning's earliest ray  
 Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam ;  
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it  
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
 In their own tinct, and added, of her wit.  
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
 And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
 Nor rested thus content, but day by day,  
 Leaving her household and good father, climb'd  
 That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,  
 Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,  
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,  
 Now made a pretty history to herself  
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
 And every scratch a lance had made upon it,  
 Conjecturing when and where : this cut is fresh ;  
 That ten years back ; this dealt him at Caerlyle ;  
 That at Caerleon ; this at Camelot :  
 And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was there !  
 And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,  
 And sav'd him : so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield  
 Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name ?  
 He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
 For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,  
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name  
 Had nam'd them, since a diamond was the prize.



For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,  
Long ere the people chose him for their King,  
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,  
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.  
A horror liv'd about the tarn, and clave  
Like its own mists to all the mountain side :  
For here two brothers, one a king, had met  
And fought together ; but their names were lost ;  
And each had slain his brother at a blow ;  
And down they fell, and made the glen abhorr'd :  
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,  
And lichen'd into colour with the crags :  
And one of these, the king, had on a crown  
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.  
And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass,  
All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull  
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown  
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn :  
And down the shingly scaur he plung'd, and caught,  
And set it on his head, and in his heart  
Heard murmurs, " Lo, thou likewise shalt be King."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the gems  
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,  
Saying, " These jewels, whereupon I chanc'd  
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—  
For public use : henceforward let there be,  
Once every year, a joust for one of these :  
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn  
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow  
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land  
Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus he spoke :  
And eight years pass'd, eight jousts had been, and still  
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,

With purpose to present them to the Queen,  
When all were won ; but meaning all at once  
To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last  
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court  
Hard on the river nigh the place which now  
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,  
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move  
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "you know it."  
"Then will you miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds  
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists—  
A sight you love to look on." And the Queen  
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.  
He thinking that he read her meaning there,  
"Stay with me, I am sick ; my love is more  
Than many diamonds," yielded ; and a heart  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen  
(However much he yearn'd to make complete  
The tale of diamonds for his destin'd boon)  
Urg'd him to speak against the truth, and say,  
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,  
And lets me from the saddle ;" and the King  
Glanc'd first at him, then her, and went his way.  
No sooner gone than suddenly she began :

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame !  
Why go you not to these fair jousts? the knights  
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd  
Will murmur, 'Lo the shameless ones, who take  
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone !'"  
Then Lancelot vex'd at having lied in vain :  
"Are you so wise? you were not once so wise,



My Queen, that summer, when you lov'd me first.  
Then of the crowd you took no more account  
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,  
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,  
Them surely can I silence with all ease.  
But now my loyal worship is allow'd  
Of all men : many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,  
The pearl of beauty : and our knights at feast  
Have pledg'd us in this union, while the King  
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?  
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,  
Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh :  
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,  
That passionate perfection, my good lord—  
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me : only here to-day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes :  
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else  
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,  
To make them like himself : but, friend, to me  
He is all fault who hath no fault at all :  
For who loves me must have a touch of earth ;  
The low sun makes the colour : I am yours,  
Not Arthur's, as you know, save by the bond.  
And therefore hear my words : go to the jousts :  
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream  
When sweetest ; and the vermin voices here  
May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights :  
" And with what face, after my pretext made,  
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a King who honours his own word,  
As if it were his God's ? "

" Yea," said the Queen,  
" A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit : we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at a touch,  
But knowing you are Lancelot ; your great name,  
This conquers : hide it therefore ; go unknown :  
Win ! by this kiss you will : and our true King  
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,  
As all for glory ; for to speak him true,  
You know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,  
No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than himself :  
They prove to him his work : win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,  
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,  
And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way ;  
Till as he trac'd a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.  
Thither he made, and wound the gateway horn.  
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkl'd man,  
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man ;  
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,  
Moving to meet him in the castle court ;



And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house  
There was not : some light jest among them rose  
With laughter dying down as the great knight  
Approach'd them : then the Lord of Astolat :  
“ Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name  
Livest between the lips ? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,  
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen : the rest, his Table Round,  
Known as they are, to me they are unknown.”

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights :  
“ Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,  
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.  
But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not.  
Hereafter you shall know me—and the shield—  
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not mine.”

Then said the Lord of Astolat, “ Here is Torre's :  
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.  
His you can have.” Then added plain Sir Torre,  
“ Yea, since I cannot use it, you may have it.”  
Here laugh'd the father, saying, “ Fie, Sir Churl,  
Is that an answer for a noble knight ?  
Allow him ! but Lavaine, my younger here,  
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,  
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before.”

“ Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not  
Before this noble knight,” said young Lavaine,  
“ For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre :

He seem'd so sullen, vex'd he could not go :  
A jest, no more ! for, knight, the maiden dreamt  
That some one put this diamond in her hand,  
And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipp'd and fell into some pool or stream,  
The castle-well, belike ; and then I said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves),  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.  
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight :  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win :  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So you will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship  
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend :  
And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear  
It is a fair large diamond,—if you may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if you will."

"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,  
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids."  
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,  
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,  
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd :  
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid  
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceas'd : the lily maid Elaine,  
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.



The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.  
Another sinning on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the world,  
Had been the sleeker for it : but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose  
And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man  
That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,  
Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,  
And bruis'd and bronz'd, she lifted up her eyes  
And lov'd him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,  
Lov'd of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain  
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind :  
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best  
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,  
And ever well and readily answer'd he :  
But Lancelot, when they glanc'd at Guinevere,  
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,  
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.  
" He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design  
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd ;  
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods  
By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke  
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

“O there, great lord, doubtless,” Lavaine said, rapt  
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
Toward greatness in its elder, “you have fought.  
O tell us—for we live apart—you know  
Of Arthur’s glorious wars.” And Lancelot spoke  
And answer’d him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem ;  
And in the four wild battles by the shore  
Of Duglas ; that on Bassa ; then the war  
That thunder’d in and out the gloomy skirts  
Of Celidon the forest ; and again  
By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King  
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady’s Head,  
Carv’d of one emerald center’d in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten’d as he breath’d ;  
And at Caerleon had he help’d his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse  
Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;  
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,  
Where many a heathen fell ; “and on the mount  
Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them ; and I saw him, after, stand  
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,  
‘They are broken, they are broken !’ for the King,  
However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—  
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs  
Saying, his knights are better men than he—  
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him : I never saw his like : there lives  
No greater leader.”



While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
"Save your great self, fair lord;" and when he fell  
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—  
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind—  
She still took note that when the living smile  
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud  
Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
Whenever in her hovering to and fro  
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,  
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness  
Of manners and of nature: and she thought  
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.  
And all night long his face before her liv'd,  
As when a painter, poring on a face,  
Divinely through all hindrance finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
The shape and colour of a mind and life,  
Lives for his children, ever at its best  
And fullest; so the face before her liv'd,  
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full  
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.  
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought  
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.  
First as in fear, step after step, she stole  
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:  
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,  
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine  
Pass'd inward, as she came from out the tower.  
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd  
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
Half envious of the flattering hand, she drew  
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amaz'd  
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw  
The maiden standing in the dewy light.  
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,

For silent, though he greeted her, she stood  
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.  
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
That he should wear her favour at the tilt.  
She brav'd a riotous heart in asking for it.  
"Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,  
I well believe, the noblest—will you wear  
My favour at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,  
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists.  
Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know."  
"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine  
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,  
That those who know should know you." And he turn'd  
Her counsel up and down within his mind,  
And found it true, and answer'd, "True, my child.  
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:  
What is it?" and she told him, "A red sleeve  
Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound  
Her token on his helmet, with a smile,  
Saying, "I never yet have done so much  
For any maiden living," and the blood  
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;  
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine  
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,  
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,  
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:  
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield  
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"  
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your squire!"  
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, "Lily maid.  
For fear our people call you lily maid  
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;  
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:"  
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,  
And thus they mov'd away: she stay'd a minute,  
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—



Her bright hair blown about the serious face  
Yet rosy-kindl'd with her brother's kiss—  
Paus'd in the gateway, standing by the shield  
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far off  
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,  
There kept it, and so liv'd in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions pass'd away  
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,  
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight  
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,  
And ever labouring had scoop'd himself  
In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,  
And cells and chambers : all were fair and dry ;  
The green light from the meadows underneath  
Struck up and liv'd along the milky roofs ;  
And in the meadows tremulous aspen trees  
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.  
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,  
And shot red fire and shadows through the cave,  
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away :  
Then Lancelot saying, " Hear, but hold my name  
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"  
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,  
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,  
But left him leave to stammer, " Is it indeed ? "  
And after muttering, " The great Lancelot,"  
At last he got his breath and answer'd, " One,  
One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,  
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,  
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
He will be there—then were I stricken blind  
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists  
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
Run through the peopled gallery which half round  
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,  
Until they found the clear-fac'd King, who sat  
Rob'd in red samite, easily to be known,  
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,  
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,  
And from the carven-work behind him crept  
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make  
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them,  
Through knots and loops and folds innumerable,  
Fled ever through the woodwork, till they found  
The new design wherein they lost themselves,  
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work :  
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
Blaz'd the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,  
" Me you call great : mine is the firmer seat,  
The truer lance : but there is many a youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
And overcome it ; and in me there dwells  
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not great :  
There is the man." And Lavaine gap'd upon him  
As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew ; and then did either side,  
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,  
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,  
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
Shock, that a man far off might well perceive,  
If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.  
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
Which were the weaker ; then he hurl'd into it  
Against the stronger : little need to speak



Of Lancelot in his glory ! King, duke, earl,  
Count, baron—whom he smote he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,  
Rang'd with the Table Round that held the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight  
Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot ; and one said to the other, " Lo !  
What is he ? I do not mean the force alone—  
The grace and versatility of the man !  
Is it not Lancelot ? " " When has Lancelot worn  
Favour of any lady in the lists ?  
Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know."  
" How then ? who then ? " a fury seiz'd on them,  
A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,  
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made  
In moving, all together down upon him  
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,  
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it ; so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing lam'd the charger, and a spear  
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head  
Pierc'd through his side, and there snapp'd, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully ;  
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,  
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.  
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet endure,  
And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
His party—though it seem'd half-miracle  
To those he fought with—drave his kith and kin,

And all the Table Round that held the lists,  
Back to the barrier ; then the heralds blew  
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve  
Of scarlet, and the pearls ; and all the knights,  
His party, cried, " Advance, and take your prize  
The diamond ; " but he answer'd, " Diamond me  
No diamonds ! for God's love, a little air !  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death !  
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field  
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,  
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, " Draw the lance-head ! "  
" Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,  
" I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."  
But he, " I die already with it : draw—  
Draw,"—and Lavaine drew, and that other gave  
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,  
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank  
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.  
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,  
There stanch'd his wound ; and there, in daily doubt  
Whether to live or die, for many a week  
Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove  
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,  
And ever-tremulous aspen trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,  
His party, knights of utmost North and West,  
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,  
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,  
" Lo, Sire, our knight, through whom we won the day,  
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize  
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."  
" Heaven hinder," said the King, " that such an one,  
So great a knight as we have seen to-day—



He seem'd to me another Lancelot—  
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—  
He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, rise,  
My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.  
Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.  
I charge you that you get at once to horse.  
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you  
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given :  
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him  
No customary honour : since the knight  
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,  
Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take  
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,  
And bring us what he is, and how he fares,  
And cease not from your quest until ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower above,  
To which it made a restless heart, he took,  
And gave, the diamond : then from where he sat  
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,  
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince  
In the mid might and flourish of his May,  
Gawain, surnam'd The Courteous, fair and strong,  
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint  
And Lamorack, a good knight, but therewithal  
Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,  
Nor often loyal to his word, and now  
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth  
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave  
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went ;  
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,  
Pass'd, thinking, "Is it Lancelot who has come  
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain  
Of glory, and has added wound to wound,  
And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd the King,

And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.  
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,  
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.  
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,  
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"  
"Nay, but one like him." "Why, that like was he."  
And when the King demanded how she knew,  
Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,  
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk  
That men went down before his spear at a touch,  
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name  
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name  
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this end  
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,  
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;  
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory.'"

Then replied the King:  
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he has trusted you.  
Surely his King and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have mov'd my laughter: now remains  
But little cause for laughter: his own kin—  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, these I—  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;  
So that he went sore wounded from the field:  
Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are mine  
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,  
Some gentle maiden's gift."



“Yea, lord,” she said,  
“Your hopes are mine,” and saying that, she chok’d,  
And sharply turn’d about to hide her face,  
Mov’d to her chamber, and there flung herself  
Down on the great King’s couch, and writh’d upon it,  
And clench’d her fingers till they bit the palm,  
And shriek’d out “Traitor” to the unhearing wall,  
Then flash’d into wild tears, and rose again,  
And mov’d about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while through all the region round  
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,  
Touch’d at all points, except the poplar grove,  
And came at last, though late, to Astolat :  
Whom glittering in enamell’d arms the maid  
Glanc’d at, and cried, “What news from Camelot, lord ?  
What of the knight with the red sleeve ?” “He won.”  
“I knew it,” she said. “But parted from the jousts  
Hurt in the side,” whereat she caught her breath ;  
Through her own side she felt the sharp lance go ;  
Thereon she smote her hand : well-nigh she swoon’d :  
And, while he gaz’d wonderingly at her, came  
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince  
Reported who he was, and on what quest  
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find  
The victor, but had ridden wildly round  
To seek him, and was wearied of the search.  
To whom the Lord of Astolat, “Bide with us,  
And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince !  
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield ;  
This will he send or come for : furthermore  
Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon,  
Needs must we hear.” To this the courteous Prince  
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
And stay’d ; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine :  
Where could be found face daintier ? then her shape

From forehead down to foot, perfect—again  
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :  
“ Well—if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for me ! ”  
And oft they met among the garden yews,  
And there he set himself to play upon her  
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height  
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence  
And amorous adulation, till the maid  
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, “ Prince,  
O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
Whence you might learn his name ? Why slight your King,  
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove  
No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the henn we slipp'd him at, and went  
To all the winds ? ” “ Nay, by mine head,” said he,  
“ I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes ;  
But an you will it let me see the shield.”  
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw  
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,  
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd :  
“ Right was the King ! our Lancelot ! that true man ! ”  
“ And right was I,” she answer'd merrily, “ I,  
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all.”  
“ And if *I* dream'd,” said Gawain, “ that you love  
This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo, you know it !  
Speak therefore : shall I waste myself in vain ? ”  
Full simple was her answer, “ What know I ?  
My brethren have been all my fellowship ;  
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,  
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,  
Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so myself—  
I know not if I know what true love is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
Methinks there is none other I can love.”



“Yea, by God’s death,” said he, “you love him well,  
But would not, knew you what all others know,  
And whom he loves.” “So be it,” cried Elaine,  
And lifted her fair face and mov’d away :  
But he pursu’d her, calling, “Stay a little !  
One golden minute’s grace ! he wore your sleeve :  
Would he break faith with one I may not name ?  
Must our true man change like a leaf at last ?  
May it be so ? why then, far be it from me  
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves !  
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well  
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave  
My quest with you ; the diamond also : here !  
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it ;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it  
From your own hand ; and whether he love or not,  
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
A thousand times !—a thousand times farewell !  
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two  
May meet at court hereafter : there, I think,  
So you will learn the courtesies of the court,  
We two shall know each other.”

Then he gave,  
And slightly kiss’d the hand to which he gave,  
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest  
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went  
A true love-ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he pass’d ; there told the King  
What the King knew, “Sir Lancelot is the knight.”  
And added, “Sire, my liege, so much I learnt ;  
But fail’d to find him, though I rode all round  
The region : but I lighted on the maid  
Whose sleeve he wore ; she loves him ; and to her,  
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,  
I gave the diamond : she will render it ;  
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place.”

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,  
"Too courteous truly ! you shall go no more  
On quest of mine, seeing that you forget  
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,  
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,  
Linger'd that other, staring after him ;  
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad  
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.  
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed :  
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,  
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."  
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all  
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most  
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame  
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.  
She, that had heard the noise of it before,  
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,  
Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranquillity.  
So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flar'd :  
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice  
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,  
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
Smil'd at each other, while the Queen, who sat  
With lips severely placid, felt the knot  
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen  
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor  
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became  
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledg'd.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,  
Crept to her father, while he mus'd alone,  
Sat on his knee, strok'd his gray face and said,



“ Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
Is yours who let me have my will ; and now,  
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits ? ”  
“ Nay,” said he, “ surely.” “ Wherefore, let me hence,”  
She answer’d, “ and find out our dear Lavaine.”  
“ You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine :  
Bide,” answer’d he : “ we needs must hear anon  
Of him, and of that other.” “ Ay,” she said,  
“ And of that other, for I needs must hence  
And find that other, wheresoe’er he be,  
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,  
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.  
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden’s aid.  
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,  
My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
To noble knights in sickness, as you know,  
When these have worn their tokens : let me hence,  
I pray you.” Then her father nodding said,  
“ Ay, ay, the diamond : wit you well, my child,  
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,  
Being our greatest : yea, and you must give it—  
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
For any mouth to gape for save a queen’s—  
Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get you gone,  
Being so very wilful you must go.”

Lightly, her suit allow’d, she slipp’d away,  
And while she made her ready for her ride,  
Her father’s latest word humm’d in her ear,  
“ Being so very wilful you must go,”  
And chang’d itself and echo’d in her heart,  
“ Being so very wilful you must die.”  
But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us ;

And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"  
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide  
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs  
To Camelot, and before the city gates  
Came on her brother with a happy face  
Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
For pleasure all about a field of flowers :  
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,  
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amaz'd,  
"Torre and Elaine ! why here? Sir Lancelot !  
How know you my lord's name is Lancelot?"  
But when the maid had told him all her tale,  
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods  
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,  
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,  
Pass'd up the still rich city to his kin,  
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot ;  
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove  
Led to the caves : there first she saw the casque  
Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve,  
Though carv'd and cut, and half the pearls away,  
Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart she laugh'd,  
Because he had not loos'd it from his helm,  
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.  
And when they gain'd the cell in which he slept,  
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.  
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
The sound not wonted in a place so still  
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes  
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,  
"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King :"  
His eyes glisten'd : she fancied, "Is it for me?"



And when the maid had told him all the tale  
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest  
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt  
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child.  
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.  
At once she slipp'd like water to the floor.  
"Alas," he said, "your ride has wearied you.  
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;  
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."  
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,  
Yet larger through his leanness, dwelt upon her,  
Till all her heart's sad secret blaz'd itself  
In the heart's colours on her simple face;  
And Lancelot look'd, and was perplex'd in mind,  
And being weak in body said no more;  
But did not love the colour; woman's love,  
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided through the fields,  
And pass'd beneath the wildly-sculptur'd gates  
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;  
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and pass'd  
Down through the dim rich city to the fields,  
Thence to the cave: so day by day she pass'd  
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
And likewise many a night: and Lancelot  
Would, though he call'd his wound a little hurt  
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times  
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid  
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
Milder than any mother to a sick child,

And never woman yet, since man's first fall,  
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love  
Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
The simples and the science of that time,  
Told him that her fine care had sav'd his life.  
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,  
Would listen for her coming, and regret  
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,  
And lov'd her with all love except the love  
Of man and woman when they love their best,  
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death  
In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
And peradventure had he seen her first,  
She might have made this and that other world  
Another world for the sick man ; but now  
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,  
His honour rooted in dishonour stood,  
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made  
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
These, as but born of sickness, could not live :  
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,  
Full often the sweet image of one face,  
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
Dispers'd his resolution like a cloud.  
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace  
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,  
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well  
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant  
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,  
And drave her ere her time across the fields  
Far into the rich city, where alone  
She murmur'd, " Vain, in vain : it cannot be.  
He will not love me : how then ? must I die ?"  
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,



That has but one plain passage of few notes,  
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"  
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,  
And found no ease in turning or in rest;  
And "Him or death," she mutter'd, "death or him,"  
Again and like a burden, "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,  
To Astolat returning rode the three.  
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self  
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,  
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,  
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes;  
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."  
And Lancelot ever press'd upon the maid  
That she should ask some goodly gift of him  
For her own self or hers; "and do not shun  
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;  
Such service have you done me, that I make  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I  
In mine own land, and what I will I can."  
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,  
But like a ghost without the power to speak.  
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,  
And bode among them yet a little space  
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanc'd  
He found her in among the garden yews,  
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,  
Seeing I must go to-day:" then out she brake:  
"Going? and we shall never see you more.  
And I must die for want of one bold word."  
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."  
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:  
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."

“ Ah, sister,” answer’d Lancelot, “ what is this ? ”  
And innocently extending her white arms,  
“ Your love,” she said, “ your love—to be your wife.

And Lancelot answer’d, “ Had I chosen to wed,  
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :  
But now there never will be wife of mine.”  
“ No, no,” she cried, “ I care not to be wife,  
But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you through the world.  
And Lancelot answer’d, “ Nay, the world, the world,  
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
To blare its own interpretation—nay,  
Full ill then should I quit your brother’s love,  
And your good father’s kindness.” And she said,  
“ Not to be with you, not to see your face—  
Alas for me then, my good days are done.”  
“ Nay, noble maid,” he answer’d, “ ten times nay !  
This is not love : but love’s first flash in youth,  
Most common : yea, I know it of mine own self :  
And you yourself will smile at your own self  
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life  
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age :  
And then will I, for true you are and sweet  
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
More specially should your good knight be poor,  
Endow you with broad land and territory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
So that would make you happy : furthermore,  
Ev’n to the death, as though you were my blood,  
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
And more than this I cannot.”

While he spoke  
She neither blush’d nor shook, but deathly pale  
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied :



“Of all this will I nothing ;” and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom through those black walls of yew  
Their talk had pierc'd, her father : “Ay, a flash,  
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.  
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion.”

Lancelot said,  
“That were against me : what I can I will ;”  
And there that day remain'd, and toward even  
Sent for his shield : full meekly rose the maid,  
Stripp'd off the case, and gave the naked shield ;  
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,  
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd  
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone,  
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound ;  
And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.  
And yet he glanc'd not up, nor wav'd his hand,  
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :  
His very shield was gone ; only the case,  
• Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.  
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd  
And grew between her and the pictur'd wall.  
Then came her father, saying in low tones,  
“Have comfort,” whom she greeted quietly.  
Then came her brethren saying, “Peace to thee,  
Sweet sister,” whom she answer'd with all calm.  
But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field  
Approaching through the darkness, call'd ; the owls  
Wailing had power upon her, and she mix'd

Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,  
And call'd her song "The Song of Love and Death,"  
And sang it : sweetly could she make and sing.

" Sweet is true love though given in vain, in vain ;  
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain :  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

" Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter death must be :  
Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to me.  
O love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

" Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,  
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

" I fain would follow love, if that could be ;  
I needs must follow death, who calls for me ;  
Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die."

High with the last line scal'd her voice, and this,  
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought  
With shuddering, " Hark the Phantom of the house  
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd  
The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo ! the blood-red light of dawn  
Flar'd on her face, she shrilling, " Let me die !"

As when we dwell upon a word we know,  
Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,  
" Is this Elaine ? " till back the maiden fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.  
At last she said, " Sweet brothers, yesternight



I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,  
And when you used to take me with the flood  
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.  
Only you would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it : there you fix'd  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because you would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood,  
Until we found the palace of the King.  
And yet you would not ; but this night I dream'd  
That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, ' Now shall I have my will : '  
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.  
So let me hence, that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the King.  
There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock at me ;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,  
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me—  
Gawain, who bad a thousand farewells to me ;  
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bad me one :  
And there the King will know me and my love,  
And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
And after my long voyage I shall rest ! ”

“ Peace,” said her father, “ O my child, you seem  
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go  
So far, being sick ? and wherefore would you look  
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all ? ”

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,  
“ I never loved him : an I meet with him,  
I care not howsoever great he be.

Then will I strike at him and strike him down,  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To which the gentle sister made reply,  
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault  
Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing, "highest?"  
(He meant to break the passion in her); "nay,  
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:  
And she returns his love in open shame;  
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:  
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
For anger: these are slanders: never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
But now it is my glory to have lov'd  
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,  
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having lov'd God's best  
And greatest, though my love had no return:  
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;  
For if I could believe the things you say,  
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,  
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,  
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavaine to write as she devis'd



A letter, word for word ; and when he ask'd,  
“ Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord ?  
Then will I bear it gladly,” she replied,  
“ For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,  
But I myself must bear it.” Then he wrote  
The letter she devis'd ; which being writ  
And folded, “ O sweet father, tender and true,  
Deny me not,” she said—“ you never yet  
Denied my fancies—this, however strange,  
My latest : lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it ; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died  
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's  
For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
And let there be prepar'd a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a barge  
Be ready on the river, cloth'd in black.  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,  
And none of you can speak for me so well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.”

She ceas'd : her father promis'd ; whereupon  
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death  
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
But ten slow mornings pass'd, and on the eleventh  
Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
And clos'd the hand upon it, and she died.  
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,  
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows

Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
 Pass'd like a shadow through the field, that shone  
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,  
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.  
 There sat the lifelong creature of the house,  
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
 So those two brethren from the chariot took  
 And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
 The silken case with braided blazonings,  
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her,  
 "Sister, farewell for ever," and again  
 "Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.  
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,  
 Steer'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—  
 In her right hand the lily, in her left  
 The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—  
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white  
 All but her face, and that clear-featur'd face  
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,  
 But fast asleep, and lay as though she smil'd.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace crav'd  
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
 The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,  
 With deaths of others, and almost his own,  
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds : for he saw  
 One of her house, and sent him to the Queen  
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed  
 With such and so unmov'd a majesty  
 She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,  
 Low-drooping till he well-nigh kiss'd her feet  
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
 The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,  
 T.



In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,  
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,  
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, "Queen,  
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making them  
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:  
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet oh grant my worship of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words  
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,  
I hear of rumours flying through your court.  
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife.  
Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect: let rumours be:  
When did not rumours fly? these, as I trust  
That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen  
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,  
Till all the place whereon she stood was green:  
Then, when he ceas'd, in one cold passive hand  
Receiv'd at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.  
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?  
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth  
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.  
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!  
For her! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.  
I doubt not that however chang'd, you keep  
So much of what is graceful: and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy  
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule;  
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!  
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;  
Deck her with these; tell her she shines me down:  
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
Oh as much fairer—as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—  
Nay, by the mother of our Lord Himself,  
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—  
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seiz'd,

And, through the casement standing wide for heat,  
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream.  
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,  
Diamonds to meet them, and they pass'd away.  
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disgust  
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,  
Close underneath his eyes, and right across  
Where these had fallen, slowly pass'd the barge  
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away  
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,



On to the palace-doorway sliding, paus'd.  
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door ; to whom,  
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gap'd, and eyes that ask'd,  
"What is it?" but the oarsman's haggard face,  
As hard and still as is the face that men  
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks  
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,  
"He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,  
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair!  
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?  
Or come to take the King to Fairyland?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbl'd of the King, the King  
Came girt with knights : then turn'd the tongueless man  
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose  
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale  
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;  
And reverently they bore her into hall.  
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,  
And Lancelot later came and mus'd at her,  
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her :  
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
Stoop'd, took, brake seal, and read it ; this was all :

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,  
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
I lov'd you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been my death.  
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,  
And to all other ladies, I make moan.  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.

Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read :

And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half thinking that her lips,  
Who had devis'd the letter, mov'd again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all :  
" My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death  
Right heavy am I ; for good she was and true,  
But lov'd me with a love beyond all love  
In women, whomsoever I have known.  
Yet to be lov'd makes not to love again ;  
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.  
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave  
No cause, not willingly, for such a love :  
To this I call my friends in testimony,  
Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,  
To break her passion, some discourtesy  
Against my nature : what I could, I did.  
I left her and I bad her no farewell ;  
Though, had I dreamt the damsel would have died,  
I might have put my wits to some rough use,  
And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen

(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm),  
" You might at least have done her so much grace,  
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."  
He rais'd his head, their eyes met and hers fell,  
He adding,

" Queen, she would not be content  
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.  
Then might she follow me through the world, she ask'd ;



It could not be. I told her that her love  
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down  
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,  
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
Estate them with large land and territory  
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,  
To keep them in all joyance : more than this  
I could not ; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,  
It will be to your worship, as my knight,  
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm  
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.  
And when the knights had laid her comely head  
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb  
Be costly, and her image thereupon,  
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
In letters gold and azure !" which was wrought  
Thereafter ; but when now the lords and dames  
And people, from the high door streaming, brake  
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he mov'd apart,  
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot,  
Forgive me ; mine was jealousy in love."

He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,  
"That is love's curse ; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."  
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,  
Approach'd him, and with full affection flung  
One arm about his neck, and spake and said :

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have  
Most love and most affiance, for I know  
What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt  
Strike down the lusty and long practis'd knight,  
And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
To win his honour and to make his name,  
And lov'd thy courtesies and thee, a man  
Made to be lov'd ; but now I would to God,  
For the wild people say wild things of thee,  
Thou couldst have lov'd this maiden, shap'd, it seems,  
By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
If one may judge the living by the dead,  
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man  
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she was, my King,  
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.  
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—  
Yea, to be lov'd, if what is worthy love  
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said the King.  
"Let love be free ; free love is for the best :  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,  
What should be best, if not so pure a love  
Cloth'd in so pure a loveliness? yet thee



She fail'd to bind, though being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,  
And at the inrunning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes  
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,  
Far off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself, "Ah, simple heart and sweet,  
You lov'd me, damsel, surely with a love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?  
Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—  
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?  
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and fame  
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?  
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?  
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,  
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Stole from his mother—as the story goes—  
She chanted snatches of mysterious song  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn  
She kiss'd me, saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,  
As a king's son,' and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!  
For what am I? what profits me my name  
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:  
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;  
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?  
To make men worse by making my sin known?  
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break  
These bonds that so defame me: not without

She wills it. Would I, if she will'd it? nay,  
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God  
I pray Him, send a sudden Angel down  
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,  
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,  
Among the tumbl'd fragments of the hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

## GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat  
There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,  
A novice : one low light betwixt them burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight  
Sir Modred ; he the nearest to the King,  
His nephew, ever like a subtle beast,  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance : for this  
He chill'd the popular praises of the King  
With silent smiles of slow disparagement ;  
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ; and sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end ; and all his aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanc'd one morn when all the court,  
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,



Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,  
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,  
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall  
To spy some secret scandal if he might.  
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best  
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
The wiliest and the worst ; and more than this  
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by  
Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand  
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,  
So from the high wall and the flowering grove  
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,  
And cast him as a worm upon the way ;  
But when he knew the Prince though marr'd with dust,  
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
Made such excuses as he might, and these  
Full knightly without scorn ; for in those days  
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn ;  
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him  
By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,  
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
And he was answer'd softly by the King  
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot holp  
To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice  
Full sharply smote his knees, and smil'd, and went :  
But, ever after, the small violence done  
Rankl'd in him and ruff'd all his heart,  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On a bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd  
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries,  
" I shudder, some one steps across my grave ;"  
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed  
She half foresaw that he, the subtle beast,

Would track her guilt until he found, and hers  
Would be for evermore a name of scorn.  
Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,  
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye ;  
Henceforward, too, the Powers that tend the soul,  
To help it from the death that cannot die,  
And save it even in extremes, began  
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,  
Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—  
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—  
Held her awake : or if she slept, she dream'd  
An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to stand  
On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—  
When lo ! her own, that broadening from her feet,  
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it  
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
And all this trouble did not pass but grew,  
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,  
And trustful courtesies of household life,  
Became her bane ; and at the last she said,  
“ O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,  
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
And if we meet again, some evil chance  
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze  
Before the people, and our lord the King.”  
And Lancelot ever promis'd, but remain'd,  
And still they met and met. Again she said,  
“ O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence.”  
And then they were agreed upon a night



(When the good King should not be there) to meet  
And part for ever. Passion-pale they met  
And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye,  
Low on the border of her couch they sat  
Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,  
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought  
His creatures to the basement of the tower  
For testimony ; and crying with full voice,  
“ Traitor, come out, ye are trapp’d at last,” arous’d  
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
Leapt on him, and hurl’d him headlong, and he fell  
Stunn’d, and his creatures took and bare him off,  
And all was still : then she, “ The end is come,  
And I am sham’d for ever ; ” and he said,  
“ Mine be the shame ; mine was the sin : but rise,  
And fly to my strong castle overseas :  
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
There hold thee with my life against the world.”  
She answer’d, “ Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so ?  
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself !  
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
Unwedded : yet rise now, and let us fly,  
For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
And bide my doom.” So Lancelot got her horse,  
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,  
And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss’d, and parted weeping : for he pass’d,  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land ; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,  
And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald  
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan :  
And in herself she moan’d, “ Too late, too late ! ”  
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,  
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
Croak’d, and she thought, “ He spies a field of death ;

For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,  
Lur'd by the crimes and frailties of the court,  
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land."

And when she came to Almesbury she spake  
There to the nuns, and said, " Mine enemies  
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
Her name to whom ye yield it, till her time  
To tell you : " and her beauty, grace, and power  
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spar'd  
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns :  
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,  
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,  
But commun'd only with the little maid,  
Who pleas'd her with a babbling heedlessness  
Which often lur'd her from herself ; but now,  
This night, a rumour wildly blown about  
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm,  
And leagued him with the heathen, while the King  
Was waging war on Lancelot : then she thought,  
" With what a hate the people and the King  
Must hate me ! " and bow'd down upon her hands  
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd  
No silence, brake it, uttering, " Late ! so late !  
What hour, I wonder, now ? " and when she drew  
No answer, by and by began to hum  
An air the nuns had taught her : " Late, so late ! "  
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said :  
" O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep.'  
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

" Late, late, so late ! and dark the night and chill  
Late, late, so late ! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.



“ No light had we : for that we do repent ;  
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.

“ No light : so late ! and dark and chill the night !  
Oh let us in, that we may find the light !  
Too late, too late : ye cannot enter now.

“ Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet ?  
Oh let us in, though late, to kiss his feet !  
No, no, too late ! ye cannot enter now.”

So sang the novice, while full passionately,  
Her head upon her hands, remembering  
Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.  
Then said the little novice prattling to her :

“ Oh pray you, noble lady, weep no more ;  
But let my words, the words of one so small,  
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,  
And if I do not there is penance given—  
Comfort your sorrows ; for they do not flow  
From evil done ; right sure am I of that,  
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,  
And weighing find them less ; for gone is he  
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,  
Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen ;  
And Modred whom he left in charge of all,  
The traitor—Ah, sweet lady, the King's grief  
For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,  
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.  
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.  
For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.  
None knows it, and my tears have brought me good :  
But even were the griefs of little ones  
As great as those of great ones, yet this grief  
Is added to the griefs the great must bear,

That howsoever much they may desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud :  
As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked Queen,  
And were I such a King with such a Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness ;  
But were I such a King, it could not be."

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,  
" Will the child kill me with her innocent talk ?"  
But openly she answer'd, " Must not I,  
If this false traitor have displac'd his lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm ?"

" Yea," said the maid, " this is all woman's grief,  
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round  
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,  
With signs and miracles and wonders, there  
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself again,  
" Will the child kill me with her foolish prate ?"  
But openly she spake and said to her,  
" O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,  
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,  
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs  
And simple miracles of thy nunnery ?"

To whom the little novice garrulously :  
" Yea, but I know : the land was full of signs  
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table—at the founding of it ;  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said  
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paus'd, and turning—there.



All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
He saw them—headland after headland flame  
Far on into the rich heart of the west :  
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,  
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice through all the land,  
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
So said my father—Yea, and furthermore,  
Next morning, while he pass'd the dim-lit woods,  
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,  
That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes  
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed :  
And still at evenings on before his horse  
The flickering fairy circle wheel'd and broke  
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke  
Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
And when at last he came to Camelot,  
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall ;  
And in the hall itself was such a feast  
As never man had dream'd ; for every knight  
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for serv'd  
By hands unseen ; and even as he said  
Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts  
While the wine ran : so glad were spirits and men  
Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen, and somewhat bitterly :  
" Were they so glad ? ill prophets were they all,  
Spirits and men : could none of them foresee,  
Not even thy wise father with his signs  
And wonders, what has fall'n upon the realm ? "

To whom the novice garrulously again :  
Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my father said,  
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave ;  
And many a mystic lay of life and death  
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,  
When round him bent the spirits of the hills  
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame :  
So said my father—and that night the bard  
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King  
As well-nigh more than man, and rail'd at those  
Who call'd him the false son of Gorlois :  
For there was no man knew from whence he came ;  
But after tempest, when the long wave broke  
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,  
There came a day as still as heaven, and then  
They found a naked child upon the sands  
Of wild Dundagil by the Cornish sea ;  
And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd him  
Till he by miracle was approven King :  
And that his grave should be a mystery  
From all men, like his birth ; and could he find  
A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
The twain together well might change the world.  
But even in the middle of his song  
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,  
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fall'n,  
But that they stay'd him up ; nor would he tell  
His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw  
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ?”

Then thought the Queen, “ Lo ! they have set her on,  
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,  
To play upon me,” and bow'd her head nor spake.  
Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,



Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue  
Full often, "and, sweet lady, if I seem  
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
Which my good father told me, check me too,  
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one  
Of noblest manners, though himself would say  
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,  
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,  
And left me; but of others who remain,  
And of the two first-fam'd for courtesy—  
And pray you check me if I ask amiss—  
But pray you, which had noblest, while you mov'd  
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King?"

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her:  
"Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and these two  
Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;  
For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners such fair fruit?  
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold  
Less noble, being, as all rumour runs,  
The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen:  
"Oh closed about by narrowing nunnery walls,  
What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights  
And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?"

If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,  
Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,  
And weep for her who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both ;  
But I should all as soon believe that his,  
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,  
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be  
Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal ;  
For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
Fir'd all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,  
"Such as thou art be never maiden more  
For ever ! thou their tool, set on to plague  
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy  
And traitress." When that storm of anger brake  
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen  
As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
And when the Queen had added, "Get thee hence,"  
Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
Saying in herself, "The simple, fearful child  
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,  
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
But help me, Heaven, for surely I repent.  
For what is true repentance but in thought—  
Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us :  
And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind



Went slipping back upon the golden days  
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,  
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,  
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord  
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure (for the time  
Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd),  
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreking through the earth,  
And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur rais'd  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before ; and on again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,  
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immers'd in such a trance,  
And moving through the past unconsciously,  
Came to that point when first she saw the King  
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find  
Her journey done, glanc'd at him, thought him cold,  
High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,  
“Not like my Lancelot”—while she brooded thus  
And grew half guilty in her thoughts again,  
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
A murmuring whisper through the nunnery ran,  
Then on a sudden a cry, “The King.” She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening ; but when armed feet  
Through the long gallery from the outer doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,  
And grovell'd with her face against the floor :

There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from the King :  
And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pause by her ; then came silence, then a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but though chang'd, the King's :

“ Liest thou here so low, the child of one  
I honour'd, happy, dead before thy shame ?  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword and fire,  
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea ;  
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,  
The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,  
Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence I come—from him.  
From waging bitter war with him ; and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,  
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,  
He spar'd to lift his hand against the King  
Who made him knight : but many a knight was slain ;  
And many more, and all his kith and kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
And many more when Modred rais'd revolt,  
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.  
And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
True men who love me still, for whom I live,  
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.  
Fear not ; thou shalt be guarded till my death.  
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.  
Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,



That I the King should greatly care to live ;  
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.  
Bear with me for the last time while I show,  
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.  
For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed  
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.  
But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
The realms together under me, their Head,  
In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.  
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her ; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven  
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.  
And all this throve until I wedded thee,  
Believing, 'lo mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy.'  
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot ;  
Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt ;  
Then others, following these my mightiest knights.

And drawing foul ensample from fair names,  
Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destin'd did obtain,  
And all through thee ! so that this life of mine  
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,  
Not greatly care to lose ; but rather think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my knights,  
And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin.  
For which of us, who might be left, could speak  
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee ?  
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk  
Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,  
And I should evermore be vex'd with thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.  
For think not, though thou wouldst not love thy lord.  
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
I am not made of so slight elements.  
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.  
I hold that man the worst of public foes  
Who either for his own or children's sake,  
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife  
Whom he knows false abide and rule the house :  
For being through his cowardice allow'd  
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
Creeps, no precaution us'd, among the crowd,  
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps  
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse  
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.  
Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns !  
Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart  
Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
The mockery of my people, and their bane."



He paus'd, and in the pause she crept an inch  
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd  
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again :

“ Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,  
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
The wrath which forc'd my thoughts on that fierce law,  
The doom of treason and the flaming death  
(When first I learnt thee hidden here), is past.  
The pang—which while I weigh'd thy heart with one  
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
Made my tears burn—is also past—in part.  
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,  
Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God  
Forgives : do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
But how to take last leave of all I loved ?  
O golden hair, with which I used to play  
Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded form,  
And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—  
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's : nay, they never were the King's.  
I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and mine own flesh,  
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,  
' I loathe thee : ' yet not less, O Guinevere,  
For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love through flesh hath wrought into my life  
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair Father Christ,

Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God, and thou  
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know  
I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,  
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.  
Through the thick night I hear the trumpet blow :  
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts  
Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against my sister's son,  
Leagued with the Lords of the White Horse and knights  
Once mine, and strike him dead, and meet myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.  
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event ;  
But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side ; see thee no more—  
Farewell ! ”

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fall'n head,  
Perceiv'd the waving of his hands that bless'd.

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found  
The casement : “ peradventure,” so she thought,  
“ If I might see his face, and not be seen.”  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door !  
And near him the sad nuns with each a light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,  
To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon clung  
Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.



And even then he turn'd ; and more and more  
 The moony vapour rolling round the King,  
 Who seem'd the Phantom of a Giant in it,  
 Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray  
 And grayer, till himself became as mist  
 Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud,  
 " O Arthur ! " there her voice brake suddenly,  
 Then—as a stream that spouting from a cliff  
 Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base  
 Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale—  
 Went on in passionate utterance :

" Gone—my lord !

Gone through my sin to slay and to be slain !  
 And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
 Farewell ? I should have answer'd his farewell.  
 His mercy chok'd me. Gone, my lord the King,  
 My own true lord ! how dare I call him mine ?  
 The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
 And makes me one pollution : he, the King,  
 Call'd me polluted : shall I kill myself ?  
 What help in that ? I cannot kill my sin,  
 If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;  
 No, nor by living can I live it down.  
 The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,  
 The months will add themselves and make the years,  
 The years will roll into the centuries,  
 And mine will ever be a name of scorn.  
 I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
 Let the world be ; that is but of the world.  
 What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,  
 Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope,  
 His hope he call'd it ; but he never mocks,  
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
 And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven  
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope

That in mine own heart I can live down sin  
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God. Ah, great and gentle lord,  
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
Among his warring senses, to thy knights—  
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took  
Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despis'd the height  
To which I would not or I could not climb—  
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air  
That pure severity of perfect light—  
I wanted warmth and colour which I found  
In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art :  
Thou art the highest and most human too,  
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
Will tell the King I love him though so late ?  
Now—ere he goes to the great Battle ? none :  
Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
But now it were too daring. Ah, my God,  
What might I not have made of thy fair world,  
Had I but lov'd thy highest creature here ?  
It was my duty to have lov'd the highest :  
It surely was my profit had I known :  
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand

Grasp'd, made her veil her eyes : she look'd and saw  
The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,  
" Yea, little maid, for am *I* not forgiven ?"  
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
All round her, weeping ; and her heart was loos'd  
Within her, and she wept with these and said :

" Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke  
The vast design and purpose of the King.  
Oh shut me round with narrowing nunnery walls,



Meek maidens, from the voices crying 'shame.'  
I must not scorn myself : he loves me still.  
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.  
So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you ;  
Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,  
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts ;  
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,  
But not rejoicing ; mingle with your rites ;  
Pray and be pray'd for ; lie before your shrines ;  
Do each low office of your holy house ;  
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole  
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes  
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I ;  
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own :  
And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer  
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,  
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King."

She said : they took her to themselves ; and she  
Still hoping, fearing " is it yet too late ? "  
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.  
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,  
And for the power of ministration in her,  
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,  
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess, liv'd  
For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, pass'd  
To where beyond these voices there is peace.

## ENOCH ARDEN.

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm ;  
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands ;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf  
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ; and higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill ;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray down  
With Danish barrows ; and a hazelwood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,  
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn ;  
And built their castles of dissolving sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or following up  
And flying the white breaker, daily left  
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff :  
In this the children play'd at keeping house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,  
While Annie still was mistress ; but at times  
Enoch would hold possession for a week :  
" This is my house and this my little wife."  
" Mine too," said Philip, " turn and turn about : "  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made  
Was master : then would Philip, his blue eyes



All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,  
Shriek out "I hate you, Enoch," and at this  
The little wife would weep for company,  
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,  
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart  
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,  
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;  
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
To purchase his own boat, and make a home  
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast  
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year  
On board a merchantman, and made himself  
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life  
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas  
And all men looked upon him favourably:  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May  
He purchased his own boat, and made a home  
For Annie, neat and nest-like, half-way up  
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,  
The younger people making holiday,  
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,  
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd  
(His father lying sick and needing him)

An hour behind ; but as he climb'd the hill,  
 Just where the prone edge of the wood began  
 To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,  
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,  
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face  
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,  
 And in their eyes and faces read his doom ;  
 Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,  
 And slipt aside, and like a wounded life  
 Crept down into the hollows of the wood ;  
 There, while the rest were loud in merry-making,  
 Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past  
 Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,  
 And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,  
 Seven happy years of health and competence,  
 And mutual love and honourable toil ;  
 With children ; first a daughter. In him woke,  
 With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish  
 To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
 And give his child a better bringing-up  
 Than his had been, or hers ; a wish renew'd,  
 When two years after came a boy to be  
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,  
 While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,  
 Or often journeying landward ; for in truth  
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil  
 In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,  
 Not only to the market-cross were known,  
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,  
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,  
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.



Then came a change, as all things human  
change.

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
Open'd a larger haven : thither used  
Enoch at times to go by land or sea ;  
And once when there, and clambering on a mast  
In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell :  
A limb was broken when they lifted him ;  
And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
Bore him another son, a sickly one :  
Another hand crept too across his trade  
Taking her bread and theirs : and on him fell,  
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
To see his children leading evermore  
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
And her, he loved, a beggar : then he pray'd  
" Save them from this, whatever comes to me."'  
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship  
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,  
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,  
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,  
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go ?  
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,  
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the  
place ?  
And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd  
No graver than as when some little cloud  
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
And isles a light in the offing : yet the wife—  
When he was gone—the children—what to do  
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans :

To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—  
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her !  
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—  
 And yet to sell her—then with what she brought  
 Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade  
 With all that seamen needed or their wives—  
 So might she keep the house while he was gone.  
 Should he not trade himself out yonder? go  
 This voyage more than once? yea twice or thrice—  
 As oft as needed—last, returning rich,  
 Become the master of a larger craft,  
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
 Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
 And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all :  
 Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,  
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
 Forward she started with a happy cry,  
 And laid the feeble infant in his arms ;  
 Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,  
 Appraised his weight and fondled father-like,  
 But had no heart to break his purposes  
 To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt  
 Her finger, Annie fought against his will :  
 Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
 But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
 Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd  
 (Sure that all evil would come out of it)  
 Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
 For her or his dear children, not to go.  
 He not for his own self caring but her,  
 Her and her children, let her plead in vain ;  
 So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.



For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,  
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand  
To fit their little streetward sitting-room  
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.  
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,  
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,  
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear  
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,  
Till this was ended, and his careful hand—  
The space was narrow—having order'd all  
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs  
Her blossom or her seedling, paused ; and he,  
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,  
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell  
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,  
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.  
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery  
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,  
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes  
Whatever came to him : and then he said  
“ Annie, this voyage by the grace of God  
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.  
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,  
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it.”  
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle “ and he,  
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—  
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—  
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees  
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,  
And make him merry, when I come home again.  
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.”

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,

And almost hoped herself ; but when he turn'd  
The current of his talk to graver things  
In sailor fashion roughly sermonising  
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,  
Heard and not heard him ; as the village girl,  
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,  
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke " O Enoch, you are wise ;  
And yet for all your wisdom well know I  
That I shall look upon your face no more."

" Well then," said Enoch, " I shall look on  
yours.

Annie, the ship I sail in passes here  
(He named the day) get you a seaman's glass,  
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments came,  
" Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,  
Look to the babes, and till I come again,  
Keep everything ship-shape, for I must go.  
And fear no more for me ; or if you fear  
Cast all your cares on God ; that anchor holds.  
Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning ? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him ? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His : He made it."

Enoch rose,  
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,  
And kissed his wonder-stricken little ones ;  
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept  
After a night of feverous wakefulness,



When Annie would have raised him Enoch said  
“Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the  
child

Remember this?” and kiss’d him in his cot.  
But Annie from her baby’s forehead clipt  
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept  
Thro’ all his future; but now hastily caught  
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention’d, came,  
Borrow’d a glass, but all in vain: perhaps  
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;  
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;  
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck  
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev’n to the last dip of the vanishing sail  
She watch’d it, and departed weeping for him;  
Then, tho’ she mourn’d his absence as his grave,  
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,  
But throve not in her trade, not being bred  
To barter, nor compensating the want  
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,  
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding “what would Enoch say?”  
For more than once, in days of difficulty  
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less  
Than what she gave in buying what she sold:  
She fail’d and sadden’d knowing it; and thus,  
Expectant of that news which never came,  
Gain’d for her own a scanty sustenance,  
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew  
Yet sicklier, tho’ the mother cared for it

With all a mother's care : nevertheless,  
Whether her business often call'd her from it,  
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,  
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell  
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,  
After a lingering—ere she was aware—  
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,  
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace  
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),  
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.  
"Surely," said Philip, "I may see her now,  
May be some little comfort;" therefore went,  
Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,  
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,  
Fresh from the burial of her little one,  
Cared not to look on any human face,  
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.  
Then Philip, standing up, said falteringly—  
"Annie, I came to ask a favour of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply—  
"Favour from one so sad and so forlorn  
As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,  
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

"I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,  
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said  
You chose the best among us—a strong man;  
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand  
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.



And wherefore did he go this weary way,  
And leave you lonely ? not to see the world—  
For pleasure ?—nay, but for the wherewithal  
To give his babes a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or yours : that was his wish.  
And if he come again, vexed will he be  
To find the precious morning hours were lost.  
And it would vex him even in his grave,  
If he could know his babes were running wild  
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—  
Have we not known each other all our lives ?  
I do beseech you by the love you bear  
Him and his children not to say me nay—  
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again  
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,  
Annie—for I am rich and well-to do.  
Now let me put the boy and girl to school ;  
This is the favour that I came to ask."

Then Annie, with her brows against the wall,  
Answer'd " I cannot look you in the face ;  
I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
When you came in my sorrow broke me down ;  
And now I think your kindness breaks me down ;  
But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on me :  
He will repay you : money can be repaid ;  
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd  
" Then you will let me, Annie ? "

There she turn'd,  
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,  
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
Then, calling down a blessing on his head,  
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,

And past into the little garth beyond.  
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,  
And bought them needful books, and every way,  
Like one who does his duty by his own,  
Made himself theirs ; and tho' for Annie's sake,  
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent  
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,  
The late and early roses from his wall,  
Or conies from the down, and now and then,  
With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
To save the offence of charitable, flour  
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind :  
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,  
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude,  
Light on a broken word to thank him with.  
But Philip was her children's all-in-all ;  
From distant corners of the street they ran  
To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;  
Lords of his house and of his mill were they ;  
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs  
Or pleasures, hung upon him, played with him  
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd  
As Enoch lost ; for Enoch seem'd to them  
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn  
Down at the far end of an avenue,  
Going we know not where : and so ten years,  
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,  
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.



It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd  
To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
And Annie would go with them ; then they begg'd  
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too :  
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,  
Blanch'd with his mill, they found ; and saying to  
him,

"Come with us Father Philip," he denied ;  
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,  
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,  
For was not Annie with them ? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,  
Just where the prone edge of the wood began  
To feather toward the hollow, all her force  
Fail'd her ; and sighing, "let me rest," she said :  
So Philip rested with her well-content ;  
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries  
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge  
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke  
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away  
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour  
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life  
He crept into the shadow : at last he said,  
Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,  
How merry they are down yonder in the wood."  
"Tired, Annie ?" for she did not speak a word.  
"Tired ?" but her face had fall'n on her hands ;  
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
"The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was  
lost—

No more of that ! why should you kill yourself  
And make them orphans quite ? ” And Annie said,  
“ I thought not of it : but—I know not why—  
Their voices make me feel so solitary.”

Then Philip, coming somewhat closer, spoke—  
“ Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
And it has been upon my mind so long,  
That tho’ I know not when it first came there,  
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,  
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
That he who left you ten long years ago  
Should still be living ; well then—let me speak :  
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help :  
I cannot help you as I wish to do,  
Unless—they say that women are so quick—  
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—  
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove  
A father to your children : I do think  
They love me as a father : I am sure  
That I love them as if they were mine own ;  
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,  
That after all these sad uncertain years,  
We might be still as happy as God grants  
To any of His creatures. Think upon it :  
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,  
No burthen, save my care for you and yours :  
And we have known each other all our lives,  
And I have loved you longer than you know.”

Then answer’d Annie ; tenderly she spoke :  
“ You have been as God’s good angel in our house.  
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,  
Philip, with something happier than myself.  
Can one love twice ? can you be ever loved  
As Enoch was ? what is it that you ask ? ”



"I am content," he answer'd, "to be loved  
A little after Enoch." "O," she cried,  
Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait a while :  
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—  
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long :  
Surely I shall be wiser in a year :  
O wait a little !" Philip sadly said,  
"Annie, as I have waited all my life  
I well may wait a little." "Nay," she cried,  
"I am bound : you have my promise—in a year :  
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?"  
And Philip answer'd, "I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up  
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day  
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead ;  
Then fearing night and chill for Annie rose,  
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.  
Up came the children laden with their spoil ;  
Then all descended to the port, and there  
At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,  
Saying, gently, "Annie, when I spoke to you,  
That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong.  
I am always bound to you, but you are free."  
Then Annie, weeping, answer'd "I am bound."

She spoke ; and in one moment as it were,  
While yet she went about her household ways,  
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,  
That he had loved her longer than she knew,  
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,  
And there he stood once more before her face,  
Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?" she ask'd.  
"Yes, if the nuts," he said, "be ripe again :  
Come out and see." But she—she put him off—  
So much to look to—such a change—a month—

Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—  
A month—no more. Then Philip, with his eyes  
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice  
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,  
“Take your own time, Annie, take your own  
time.”

And Annie could have wept for pity of him ;  
And yet she held him on, delayingly,  
With many a scarce-believable excuse,  
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,  
Till half-another year had slipped away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,  
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her ;  
Some that she but held off to draw him on ;  
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,  
As simple folk that knew not their own minds ;  
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly  
Would hint at worse in either. Her own son  
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish ;  
But evermore the daughter prest upon her  
To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty ;  
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew  
Careworn and wan ; and all these things fell on her  
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly  
Pray'd for a sign “my Enoch is he gone?”  
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night  
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,  
Started from bed, and struck herself a light,



Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
"Under a palmtree." That was nothing to her :  
No meaning there : she closed the Book and slept :  
When lo ! her Enoch sitting on a height,  
Under a palmtree, over him the Sun :  
"He is gone," she thought, "he is happy, he is  
singing  
Hosanna in the highest : yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms  
Whereof the happy people strowing, cried,  
'Hosanna in the highest !'" Here she woke,  
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him—  
"There is no reason why we should not wed."  
"Then for God's sake," he answer'd, "both our  
sakes,  
So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,  
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.  
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.  
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,  
She knew not whence ; a whisper on her ear,  
She knew not what ; nor loved she to be left  
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.  
What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often  
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,  
Fearing to enter : Philip thought he knew.  
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,  
Being with child : but when her child was born,  
Then her new child was as herself renew'd,  
Then the new mother came about her heart,  
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch ? prosperously sail'd

The ship *Good Fortune*, tho' at setting forth  
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook  
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext  
She slipt across the summer of the world,  
Then after a long tumble about the Cape  
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,  
She passing thro' the summer world again,  
The breath of heaven came continually  
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,  
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought  
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,  
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage : at first, indeed,  
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,  
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head  
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows :  
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,  
Then baffling, a long course of them ; and last  
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens  
Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came  
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,  
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,  
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn  
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,  
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots ;  
Nor, save for pity, was it hard to take  
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.  
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge  
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,  
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,



Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,  
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,  
Lay lingering out a three-years' death-in-life.  
They could not leave him. After he was gone,  
The two remaining found a fallen stem ;  
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,  
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell  
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.  
In those two deaths he read God's warning "wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns  
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,  
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,  
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,  
The lustre of the long convolvuluses  
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran  
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
And glories of the broad belt of the world,  
All these he saw ; but what he fain had seen  
He could not see, the kindly human face,  
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard  
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,  
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,  
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd  
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep  
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,  
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long  
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail :  
No sail from day to day, but every day  
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
Among the palms and ferns and precipices ;  
The blaze upon the waters to the east ;  
The blaze upon his island overhead ;

The blaze upon the waters to the west ;  
 Then the great stars that globed themselves in  
     Heaven,  
 The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again  
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,  
 So still, the golden lizard on him paused,  
 A phantom made of many phantoms moved  
 Before him haunting him, or he himself  
 Moved haunting people, things and places, known  
 Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;  
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,  
 The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,  
 The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,  
 The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill  
 November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,  
 The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,  
 And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,  
 Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—  
 He heard the pealing of his parish bells ;  
 Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up  
 Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle  
 Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart  
 Spoken with That, which being everywhere  
 Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,  
 Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head  
 The sunny and rainy seasons came and went  
 Year after year. His hopes to see his own,  
 And pace the sacred old familiar fields,  
 Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom  
 Came suddenly to an end. Another ship



(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,  
Like the *Good Fortune*, from her destined course,  
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay :  
For since the mate had seen, at early dawn,  
Across a break on a mist-wreathen isle,  
The silent water slipping from the hills,  
They sent a crew that landing burst away  
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores  
With clamour. Downward from his mountain  
gorge

Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,  
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,  
Muttering and mumbling, idiot-like it seem'd,  
With inarticulate rage, and making signs  
They knew not what : and yet he led the way  
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran ;  
And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
And heard them talking, his long-bound tongue  
Was loosen'd, till he made them understand ;  
Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took aboard :  
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
Scarce credited at first but more and more,  
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it :  
And clothes they gave him and free passage home ;  
But oft he work'd among the rest and shook  
His isolation from him. None of these  
Came from his county, or could answer him,  
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.  
And dull the voyage was with long delays,  
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but evermore  
His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon  
He, like a lover, down thro' all his blood  
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath  
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall :  
And that same morning officers and men  
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,

Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it :  
Then moving up the coast they landed him,  
Ev'n in that harbour whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to anyone,  
But homeward—home—what home? had he a home?  
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,  
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,  
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,  
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray;  
Cut off the length of highway on before,  
And left but narrow breadth to left and right  
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.  
On the nigh-naked tree the Robin piped  
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze  
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down :  
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom ;  
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light  
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,  
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home  
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes  
In those far-off seven happy years were born ;  
But finding neither light nor murmur there  
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept  
Still downward thinking "dead or dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,  
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,  
He thought it must have gone ; but he was gone  
Who kept it ; and his widow, Miriam Lane,  
With daily-dwindling profits held the house ;  
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now



Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.  
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,  
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
Told him, with other annals of the port,  
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,  
So broken—all the story of his house.  
His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
How Philip put her little ones to school,  
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,  
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth  
Of Philip's child : and o'er his countenance  
No shadow past, nor motion : anyone,

Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale  
Less than the teller : only when she closed—  
“ Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost ”—  
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated muttering “ cast away and lost ; ”  
Again in deeper inward whispers “ lost ! ”

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again ;  
“ If I might look on her sweet face again  
And know that she is happy.” So the thought  
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,  
At evening when the dull November day  
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.  
There he sat down gazing on all below ;  
There did a thousand memories roll upon him,  
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,  
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures  
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes  
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,

The latest house to landward ; but behind,  
 With one small gate that open'd on the waste,  
 Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd :  
 And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
 A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk  
 Of shingle, and a walk divided it :  
 But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole  
 Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and thence  
 That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs  
 Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board  
 Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the hearth :  
 And on the right hand of the hearth he saw  
 Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,  
 Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees ;  
 And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,  
 A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
 Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand  
 Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
 To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,  
 Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd :  
 And on the left hand of the hearth he saw  
 The mother glancing often toward her babe,  
 But turning now and then to speak with him,  
 Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,  
 And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled

Now when the dead man come to life beheld  
 His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe  
 Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,  
 And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,  
 And his own children tall and beautiful,  
 And him, that other, reigning in his place,  
 Lord of his rights and of his children's love—  
 Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,



Because things seen are mightier than things heard,  
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,  
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,  
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,  
And feeling all along the garden-wall,  
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

"Too hard to bear ! why did they take me thence ?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou  
That did'st uphold me on my lonely isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer ! aid me, give me strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her peace.  
My children too ! must I not speak to these ?  
They know me not. I should betray myself.  
Never : no father's kiss for me—the girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced ; but when he rose and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street he went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
"Not to tell her, never to let her know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
 Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore  
 Prayer from a living source within the will,  
 And beating up thro' all the bitter world,  
 Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,  
 Kept him a living soul. "This miller's wife,"  
 He said to Miriam, "that you told me of,  
 Has she no fear that her first husband lives?"  
 "Ay, ay, poor soul," said Miriam, "fear enow!  
 If you could tell her you had seen him dead,  
 Why, that would be her comfort;" and he thought  
 "After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,  
 I wait His time," and Enoch set himself,  
 Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.  
 Almost to all things could he turn his hand.  
 Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought  
 To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd  
 At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
 That brought the stinted commerce of those days;  
 Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:  
 Yet since he did but labour for himself,  
 Work without hope, there was not life in it  
 Whereby the man could live; and as the year  
 Roll'd itself round again to meet the day  
 When Enoch had return'd, a languor came  
 Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
 Weakening the man, till he could do no more,  
 But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.  
 And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.  
 For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck  
 See, thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall,  
 The boat that bears the hope of life approach  
 To save the life despair'd of, than he saw  
 Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope  
 On Enoch thinking "after I am gone,



Then may she learn I loved her to the last."  
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said—  
"Woman, I have a secret—only swear,  
Before I tell you—swear upon the book  
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."  
"Dead" clamour'd the good woman, "hear him talk!  
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round."  
"Swear," added Enoch, sternly, "on the book."  
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.  
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,  
"Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"  
"Know him?" she said, "I knew him far away.  
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;  
Held his head high, and cared for no man, he."  
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;  
"His head is low, and no man cares for him.  
I think I have not three days more to live;  
I am the man." At which the woman gave  
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.  
"You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot  
Higher than you be." Enoch said again  
"My God has bow'd me down to what I am;  
My grief and solitude have broken me;  
Nevertheless, know you that I am he  
Who married — but that name has twice been  
changed—  
I married her who married Philip Ray.  
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his voyage,  
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,  
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,  
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,  
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly  
To rush abroad all round the little haven,  
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;  
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,  
Saying only—"See your bairns before you go!"

Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose  
 Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung  
 A moment on her words, but then replied.  
 "Woman, disturb me not now at the last,  
 But let me hold my purpose till I die.  
 Sit down again ; mark me and understand,  
 While I have power to speak. I charge you now,  
 When you shall see her, tell her that I died  
 Blessing her, praying for her, loving her ;  
 Save for the bar between us, loving her  
 As when she laid her head beside my own.  
 And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw  
 So like her mother, that my latest breath  
 Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.  
 And tell my son that I died blessing him.  
 And say to Philip that I blest him too ;  
 He never meant us anything but good.  
 But if my children care to see me dead,  
 Who hardly knew me living, let them come,  
 I am their father ; but she must not come,  
 For my dead face would vex her after-life.  
 And now there is but one of all my blood,  
 Who will embrace me in the world-to-be :  
 This hair is his : she cut it off and gave it,  
 And I have borne it with me all these years,  
 And thought to bear it with me to my grave ;  
 But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,  
 My babe in bliss : wherefore, when I am gone,  
 Take, give her this, for it may comfort her :  
 It will, moreover, be a token to her  
 That I am he."

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane  
 Made such a voluble answer, promising all,  
 That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her  
 Repeating all he wish'd, and once again  
 She promised.



Then the third night after this,  
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,  
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,  
There came so loud a calling of the sea,  
That all the houses in the haven rang.  
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad  
Crying with a loud voice "a sail ! a sail !  
I am saved ;" and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
And when they buried him the little port  
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

## LATER IDYLS.

### THE GRANDMOTHER'S APOLOGY.

AND Willy, my eldest born, is gone, you say, little Anne?  
Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man.  
And Willy's wife has written : she never was overwise,  
Never the wife for Willy : he wouldn't take my advice.

#### II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,  
Hadh't a head to manage, and drank himself into the grave.  
Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I was against it for one.  
Eh !—but he wouldn't hear me--and Willy, you say, is gone.

#### III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest boy, the flower of the flock,  
Never a man could fling him : for Willy stood like a rock.  
"Here's a leg for a babe of a week !" says doctor ; and he would  
    be bound,  
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

#### IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his  
    tongue !  
I ought to have gone before him : I wonder he went so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie : I have not long to stay ;  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.



Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold ;  
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old :  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest ;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have went with the best.

## VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie : it cost me a world of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time : I knew, but I would not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar !  
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

## VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,  
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

## IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day ,  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.  
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been !  
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself clean.

## X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrupt the  
    nightingale.

## XI.

All of a sudden he stopt : there past by the gate of the farm,  
Willy—he didn't see me,—and Jenny hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how ;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one—it makes me angry now.

## XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he mean't .  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking courtsey and went.  
And I said, " Let us part : in a hundred years it'll all be the same,  
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name."

## XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine :  
" Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.  
And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill ;  
But marry me out of hand : we two shall be happy still."

## XIV.

" Marry you, Willy !" said I, " but I needs must speak my mind,  
I fear you will listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind."  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, " No, love,  
no ;"  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## XV.

So Willy and I were wedded : I wore a lilac gown ;  
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.  
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

## XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.  
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath ;  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife ;  
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.



## XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain :  
I look'd at the still little body—his trouble had all been in vain.  
For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn :  
But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was  
born.

## XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay :  
Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have his way ;  
Never jealous—not he : we had many a happy year ;  
And he died, and I could not weep—my own time seem'd so near.

## XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died :  
I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.  
And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :  
But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

## XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,  
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you ;  
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,  
While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

## XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too—they sing to their  
team :  
Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.  
They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed—  
I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

## XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive ;  
For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :  
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten ;  
I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

## XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;  
I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve :  
And the neighbours come and laugh and gossip, and so do I ;  
I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

## XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad :  
But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had ;  
And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease ;  
And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

## XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,  
And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it again.  
I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest ;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

## XXVI.

Só Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower :  
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour :  
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next ;  
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vexed ?

## XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was overwise.  
Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my eyes.  
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.  
But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have long to stay.



## SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred ;  
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child—  
One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years old ;  
They, thinking that her clear germander eye  
Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,  
Came, with a month's leave given them, to the sea :  
For which his gains were dock'd, however small :  
His gains were small, and hard his work ; besides,  
Their slender household fortunes (for the man  
Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep :  
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
Would darken, as he cursed his credulousness,  
And that one unctuous mouth which lured him, rogue,  
To buy wild shares in some Peruvian mine.  
Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a coast,  
All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,  
At close of day ; slept, woke, and went the next,  
The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,  
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,  
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,  
Announced the coming doom, and fulminated  
Against the scarlet woman and her creed ;  
For sideways up he swung his arms, and shriek'd  
" Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as if he held  
The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself  
Were that great Angel ; " Thus with violence  
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;  
Then comes the close." The gentle-hearted wife  
Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;  
He at his own : but when the wordy storm  
Had ended, forth they moved and paced the sand,  
Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,  
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce believed

(The sootflake of so many a summer still  
Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea.  
So now on sand they walk'd, and now on cliff,  
Lingering about the thymy promontories,  
Until the sails were darken'd in the west,  
And rosed in the east : then homeward and to bed :  
Where she, who kept a tender Christian hope  
Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
Returning, as the bird returns, at night,  
" Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,"  
Said, " Love, forgive him : " but he did not speak ;  
And silenced by that silence lay the wife,  
Remembering our dear Lord who died for all,  
And musing on the little lives of men,  
And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full tide  
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the foremost rocks  
Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild sea-smoke,  
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell  
In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon  
Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs  
Heard thro' the living roar. At this the babe,  
Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd and woke  
The mother, and the father suddenly cried,  
" A wreck, a wreck ! " then turn'd, and groaning said,

" Forgive ! How many will say, ' forgive,' and find  
A sort of absolution in the sound  
To hate a little longer ! No ; the sin  
That neither God nor man can well forgive,  
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
It is not true that second thoughts are best,  
But first, and third, which are a riper first ;  
Too ripe, too late ! they come too late for use.  
Ah love, there surely lives in man and beast  
Something divine to warn them of their foes :



And such a sense, when first I lighted on him,  
 Said, 'Trust him not;' but after, when I came  
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him less;  
 Fought with what seem'd my own uncharity;  
 Sat at his table; drank his costly wines;  
 Made more and more allowance for his talk;  
 Went further, fool! and trusted him with all,  
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen years  
 Of dust and deskwork: there is no such mine,  
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,  
 Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea roars  
 Ruin: a fearful night!"

"Not fearful; fair,"

Said the good wife, "if every star in heaven  
 Can make it fair: you do but hear the tide.  
 Had you ill dreams?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd  
 Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
 And I from out the boundless outer deep  
 Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
 Of those dark caves that run beneath the cliffs.  
 I thought the motion of the boundless deep  
 Bore through the cave, and I was heaved upon it  
 In darkness: then I saw one lovely star  
 Larger and larger. 'What a world,' I thought,  
 'To live in!' but in moving on I found  
 Only the landward exit of the cave,  
 Bright with the sun upon the stream beyond:  
 And near the light a giant woman sat,  
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
 A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt  
 Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
 As high as heaven, and every bird that sings:  
 And here the night-light flickering in my eyes  
 Awoke me."

"That was then your dream," she said,  
 "Not sad, but sweet."

“So sweet, I lay,” said he,  
“And mused upon it, drifting up the stream  
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
The broken vision ; for I dream’d that still  
The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
And that the woman walk’d upon the brink :  
I wonder’d at her strength, and ask’d her of it :  
‘It came,’ she said, ‘by working in the mines :’  
O then to ask her of my shares, I thought ;  
And ask’d ; but not a word ; she shook her head.  
And then the motion of the current ceas’d,  
And there was rolling thunder ; and we reach’d  
A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns ;  
But she with her strong feet up the steep hill  
Trod out a path : I follow’d ; and at top  
She pointed seaward : there a fleet of glass,  
That seem’d a fleet of jewels under me,  
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
That not one moment ceased to thunder, past  
In sunshine : right across its track there lay,  
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
Or what seem’d gold : and I was glad at first  
To think that in our often-ransack’d world  
Still so much gold was left ; and then I fear’d  
Lest that gay navy there should splinter on it,  
And fearing waved my arm to warn them off ;  
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
(I thought I could have died to save it) near’d,  
Touch’d, clink’d, and clash’d, and vanish’d, and I woke,  
I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
My dream was Life ; the woman honest Work ;  
And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
Wreck’d on a reef of visionary gold.”

“Nay, ’ said the kindly wife to comfort him,  
“You raised your arm, you tumbled down and broke  
The glass with little Margaret’s medicine in it ;



And, breaking that, you made and broke your dream :  
A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

"No trifle," groan'd the husband ; "yesterday  
I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd  
That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.  
Like her, he shook his head. 'Show me the books !'  
He dodged me with a long and loose account.  
'The books, the books !' but he, he could not wait,  
Bound on a matter he of life and death :  
When the great Books (see Daniel seven, the tenth)  
Were open'd, I should find he meant me well ;  
And then began to bloat himself, and ooze  
All over with the fat affectionate smile  
That makes the widow lean. 'My dearest friend,  
Have faith, have faith ! We live by faith,' said he ;  
'And all things work together for the good  
Of those'—it makes me sick to quote him—last  
Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-you went.  
I stood like one that had received a blow :  
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,  
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
A curse in his God-bless-you : then my eyes  
Pursued him down the street, and far away,  
Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee."

"Was he so bound, poor soul?" said the good wife ;  
"So are we all : but do not call him, love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved, forgive.  
His gain is loss ; for he that wrongs his friend  
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about  
A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd :  
And that drags down his life : then comes what comes

Hereafter : and he meant, he said he meant,  
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you well."

" ' With all his conscience and one eye askew '—  
Love, let me quote these lines, that you may learn  
A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of yours—  
' With all his conscience and one eye askew,  
So false, he partly took himself for true ;  
Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,  
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye ;  
Who, never naming God except for gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain ;  
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he forged,  
And snake-like slimed his victim ere he gorged ;  
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest  
Arising, did his holy oily best,  
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and Heaven,  
To spread the Word by which himself had thriven.  
How like you this old satire ? "

" Nay," she said,

" I loathe it : he had never kindly heart,  
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.  
But will you hear my dream, for I had one  
That altogether went to music ? Still,  
It awed me. Well—I dream'd that round the north  
A light, a belt of luminous vapour, lay,  
And ever in it a low musical note  
Swell'd up and died ; and, as it swell'd, a ridge  
Of breaker came from out the belt, and still  
Grew with the growing note, and when the note  
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on these cliffs  
Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as that  
Which lived within the belt) by which I saw  
That all these lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,  
But huge cathedral fronts of every age,



Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,  
 One after one : and then the great ridge drew,  
 Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
 And past into the belt and swell'd again  
 To music : ever when it broke I saw  
 The statues, saint, or king, or founder fall ;  
 Then from the gaps of ruin which it left  
 Came men and women in dark clusters round,  
 Some crying, ' Set them up ! they shall not fall !'  
 And others, ' Let them lie, for they have fall'n.'  
 And still they strove and wrangled : and I grieved  
 In my strange dream, I knew not why, to find  
 Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
 With that sweet note ; and ever when their shrieks  
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
 Returning, tho' none mark'd it, on the crowd  
 Broke, mix'd with awful light, and show'd their eyes  
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept away  
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,  
 To the waste deeps together : and I fixt  
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
 Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars,—  
 The Virgin Mother standing with her child  
 High up on one of those dark minster-fronts—  
 Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
 Which mix'd with little Margaret's, and I woke,  
 And my dream awed me :—well—but what are dreams ?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,  
 And mine but from the crying of a child."

" Child ? No ! " said he, " but this tide's roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms  
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)  
 Went both to make your dream : but were there such  
 A music, harmonizing our wild cries,

Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,  
 Why, that would make our Passions far too like  
 The discords dear to the musician. No—  
 One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven :  
 True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune  
 With nothing but the Devil !”

“ ‘ True ’ indeed !

One of our town, but later by an hour  
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore ;  
 While you were running down the sands, and made  
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow flap,  
 Good man, to please the child : she brought strange news,  
 I would not tell you then to spoil your day,  
 But he, at whom you rail so much, is dead.”

“ Dead ? who is dead ?”

“ The man your eye pursued.

A little after you had parted with him,  
 He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.”

“ Dead ? he ? of heart-disease ? what heart had he  
 To die of ? dead !”

“ Ah, dearest, if there be

A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
 And if he did that wrong you charge him with,  
 His angel broke his heart. But your rough voice  
 (You spoke so loud) has roused the child again.  
 Sleep, little birdie, sleep ! will she not sleep  
 Without her ‘ little birdie ’ ? well then, sleep,  
 And I will sing you ‘ birdie.’ ”

Saying this,

The woman half turn'd round from him she loved,  
 Left him one hand, and reaching through the night  
 Her other, found (for it was close beside)  
 And half-embraced the basket cradle-head  
 With one soft arm, which, like the pliant bough  
 That moving moves the nest and nestling, sway'd  
 The cradle, while she sang this baby song.



## LATER IDYLS.

What does little birdie say  
 In her nest at peep of day?  
 Let me fly, says little birdie,  
 Mother, let me fly away.  
 Birdie, rest a little longer,  
 Till the little wings are stronger,  
 So she rests a little longer,  
 Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
 In her bed at peep of day?  
 Baby says, like little birdie,  
 Let me rise and fly away.  
 Baby, sleep a little longer,  
 Till the little limbs are stronger.  
 If she sleeps a little longer,  
 Baby too shall fly away.

“She sleeps: let us too, let all evil, sleep.  
 He also sleeps—another sleep than ours.  
 He can do no more wrong: forgive him, dear,  
 And I shall sleep the sounder!”

Then the man.

“His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to come.  
 Yet let your sleep for this one night be sound:  
 I do forgive him!”

“Thanks, my love,” she said,  
 “Your own will be the sweeter,” and they slept.

## TITHONUS.

Ay me! ay me! the woods decay and fall,  
 The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,  
 Man comes and tills the earth and lies beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
 The ever silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a man—  
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
To his great heart none other than a God !  
I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."  
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,  
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd  
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears  
To hear me? Let me go : take back thy gift :  
Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ; there comes  
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,  
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,  
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,  
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.



Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?  
“The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.”

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—  
The lucid outline forming round thee, saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings,  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm  
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd  
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,  
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:  
How can my nature longer mix with thine?  
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground;  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;  
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

## NOTES.

Page 1, title.

TO QUEEN VICTORIA. This dedicatory poem was first attached to Tennyson's collected works in 1851, the year following his succession to the laureateship.

Page 1, line 8.

*Him that utter'd nothing base.* The allusion is, of course, to Wordsworth, whom Tennyson succeeded as laureate. The present Lord Tennyson (*Life* i. 338) records that his father, in writing this poem, was particularly anxious to pay a fitting tribute to Wordsworth, whom he regarded as "a representative Poet Laureate: such a poet as kings should honour, and such an one as would do honour to kings."

Page 9, title.

TO——. These lines are said to be addressed to J. W. Blakesley, Tennyson's contemporary at Trinity, afterwards Dean of Lincoln.

Page 21, title.

SONG—THE OWL. This poem, with that which follows, was no doubt suggested by a pet owl which the young Tennyson decoyed into his room at Somersby Rectory, by calling back to it at night with so close an imitation of the bird's natural cry, that it came to him as to a companion. Tennyson was always intimately acquainted with the variations in the song of birds, as his own *Throstle* and the present onomatopœic poem abundantly prove.

Page 27, title.

ODE TO MEMORY. This poem is full of allusions to the poet's boyhood and to the Lincolnshire scenery about his home. The passage beginning on p. 29, line 2, is a careful picture of the Rectory at Somersby.

Page 28, line 21.

It is worth noticing that this line, and that which follows, are to be found with one slight variant ("Listenest" for "Listening") in *Timbuctoo*, Tennyson's Cambridge prize poem of 1829.

Page 30, line 10.

*A sand-built ridge* Clearly a reminiscence of Mablethorpe, where the Tennysons spent several summer holidays during the poet's boyhood.

Page 30, line 18.

Lord Tennyson (*Life* i. 3) remarks that this is a detailed description of the garden at Somersby.

Page 34, title.

A CHARACTER. Lord Tennyson (*Life* i. 37) says that this poem describes a well-known Cambridge orator, S——, who was "a very plausible, parliament-like, self-satisfied speaker at the Union Debating Society."

Page 37, title.

THE POET'S MIND. A story concerning the origin of this poem, which was told to the present annotator by a descendant of Dean Blakesley's, may be given here for its biographical interest, though it is right to add that it is not included in



the authoritative *Life*. It is said that at one of the meetings of the "Apostles," the Trinity literary and debating society, Tennyson recited that strange and imaginative poem, *The Kraken*, and Blakesley, who was present, was amused at its eccentricity, and at the conclusion of the recital muttered something about "boiled cod's head." Tennyson took no notice at the time; but, when next the company met, he announced in his gruff voice that he had got "a poem for Blakesley this time," whereupon he began, "Vex not thou the poet's mind," to the intense amusement of the assembly.

Page 44, line 19.

*Birk*, i.e., birch.

Page 45, line 9.

*Eglatere*, variant for eglantine.

Page 46, line 5.

*Balm-cricket*. This word is interpreted in two ways: some critics taking it to imply a cricket whose carol is calculated to soothe; others reading "balm" as equivalent to *baum*, a tree. Tennyson's well-known acquaintance with botanical terms renders the second explanation the more probable.

Page 46, title.

**THE KRAKEN.** See note on *The Poet's Mind*. The name "Kraken" is originally derived from the Old Swedish, and means "stump of a tree," this being the shape and appearance of the fabulous sea-monster which was supposed to lurk off the shores of Norway.

Page 51, line 28.

*Whom Gideon school'd with briers.*  
See Judges viii. 16.

Page 52, title.

**SONNET TO J. M. K.**, i.e., John Mitchell Kemble, one of Tennyson's contemporaries at Cambridge. Kemble said of Tennyson, "In Alfred's mind the materials of the greatest works are heaped in an abundance which is almost confusion."

Page 53, title.

**THE LADY OF SHALOTT.** In this exquisite poem, which was written in 1832, we see Tennyson's imagination first fastening upon the Arthurian legend. Tennyson himself regarded it as of allegorical character, suggesting that the Lady is suddenly stirred by a new-born love out of the world of shadows into that of reality.

Page 53, line 9.

*Shalott*. The name is a variant of Astolat, as which it appears in the Idyls, "Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat."

Page 54, line 17.

*A mirror clear*. The pictorial setting of the poem is better understood when we remember that the mirror was set behind the tapestry, in all work of this kind, to enable the worker to see the effect of her stitches without moving from her seat. Tennyson adds the touch that the Lady actually works into her tapestry the life which she sees reflected upon the mirror from without.

Page 55, line 21.

*Golden Galaxy*. Used here in its original sense of the Milky Way. Compare Milton, "Paradise Lost" vii. 579—

"The galaxy, that milky way  
Which nightly, as a circling zone, thou seest  
Powdered with stars."

Page 55, line 24.

*Baldric*, a richly-ornamented belt, worn over the right shoulder, and carrying a bugle or sword.

Page 58, title.

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH. Lord Tennyson (*Life* i. 117) says that this poem came to his father as he was travelling between Narbonne and Perpignan.

Page 60, line 25.

*Cicala*, the cicada, an insect resembling a grasshopper, but distinguished from it by the length of its antennæ, and by the fact that it sings in the dusk, while the grasshopper is vocal principally in the sunshine.

Page 65, title.

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER. Of the setting of this poem Tennyson said that the mill was no particular mill, but that, if he thought of any, it was of Trumpington Mill, near Cambridge.

Page 74, title.

ÆNONE. This exquisitely beautiful poem, the first of Tennyson's classical studies, was begun in 1830, when Tennyson and Arthur Hallam were travelling in the Pyrenees. It was begun in the Valley of Caunteretz, which gives the colouring to the opening passages. But the poem was most carefully worked upon afterwards, and was practically rewritten between the publication of the volume of 1833, and those of 1842.

Page 74, line 28.

*The cicala sleeps*. Tennyson was afterwards persuaded to alter this, on the assumption that, if the cicala be taken for the grasshopper, its song would be most persistent at noonday. But if he meant the cicada

(see note on page 60, line 25), he was right, for that insect becomes vocal with twilight.

Page 83, title.

THE PALACE OF ART. This poem was suggested (*Life* i. 118) by a remark of Trench's—"Tennyson, we cannot live in art." It is inspired by Tennyson's belief that "the God-like life is with man and for man." Spedding, in *The Edinburgh Review* (1843), put the theme of the poem in a nutshell. "It represents allegorically," he said, "the condition of a mind which, in the love of beauty, and the triumphant consciousness of knowledge and intellectual supremacy, in the intense enjoyment of its own power and glory, has lost sight of its relation to man and God."

Page 87, line 1.

This picture of King Arthur is a suggestive foreshadowing of the scene in the *Morte d'Arthur*.

Page 87, line 7.

The *Ausonian king*, i.e., Numa Pompilius.

Page 88, line 1.

The *Ionian father*, i.e., Homer, father of poetry.

Page 88, line 27.

*Large-brow'd Verulam*, i.e., Francis Bacon.

Page 89, line 3.

Most readers will be familiar with the legend which tells that the sun's rays at rising struck musical sounds out of the statue of Memnon at Thebes.

Page 90, line 19.

*Like Herod*. See Acts xii. 22. "And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and



not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory."

Page 97, line 16.

*Charles's Wain*, a popular country name for the constellation of Ursa Major, or the Greater Bear.

Page 99, line 21.

The howling of a dog, or the ticking of the spider known as the "death-watch" are, among the superstitious, taken as forewarnings of death.

Page 101, title.

The idea of THE LOTOS-EATERS was derived from the ninth book of the *Odyssey*, where they are described as giving the lotos to the companions of Ulysses, who, when they had eaten of that pleasant fruit, had no more wish to bring back news, nor to return, but preferred to remain eating the lotos, and to be forgetful of return.

Page 101, line 11.

*Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn*. It is rather curious that Tennyson, who invented this metaphor as being the most closely representative of the appearance of a distant water-fall, should have been years afterwards rebuked by a friendly critic for a figure chosen from theatrical associations, on the ground that lawn is the material actually used on the stage to imitate falling water!

Page 105, line 6.

*Moly*, the fabulous plant given by Hermes to Ulysses as an antidote to Circe's charms.

Page 106, title.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN has been more altered since its first appearance than almost any of Tennyson's other poems. It originally opened

with four stanzas, beginning "As when a man that sails in a balloon," which were afterwards rejected. The textual alterations were also innumerable.

Page 107, line 17.

This verse was particularly admired by Charles Dickens for the multitude of images it presents in a little space.

Page 109, line 5.

The first figure is, of course, that of Helen.

Page 109, line 20.

*I.e.*, Iphigenia.

Page 109, line 25.

*I.e.*, Aulis.

Page 110, line 14.

*I.e.*, Cleopatra.

Page 112, line 2.

The spirit of Jephthah's daughter. See Judges xi.

Page 114, line 19.

The allusion is, of course, to Fulvia, the wife of Antony, "the married woman," as Cleopatra contemptuously describes her in Shakespeare.

Page 114, line 26.

*Her who clasp'd*, *i.e.*, Margaret Roper, daughter of Sir Thomas More.

Page 114, line 29.

*I.e.*, Eleanor, Queen of Edward I.

Page 116, line 21.

The allusion is, of course, to Richard I.

Page 116, line 24.

Chatelet was accused of being concerned in a love-affair with Mary Queen of Scots, and was executed on the suspicion.

Page 119, line 20.

*Kate hath an unbridled tongue.*  
It is almost impossible to resist the impression that Tennyson had in his mind some echo of Stephano's song ("Tempest" ii. 2)—

"None of us car'd for Kate:  
For she had a tongue with a tang,  
Would say to a sailor 'Go hang!'"

Page 121, line 15.

*Espaliers* are rows of trellis-work, with flowers or creepers twined upon them.

Page 121, line 22.

*Jenneting*, a kind of early apple.

Page 123, title.

To J. S., i.e., James Spedding. The occasion of the poem was the death of Spedding's brother.

Page 124, line 17.

Tennyson's father died in March 1831; he was found in his study chair, having passed away peacefully at his morning's work.

Page 133, title.

THE EPIC. When first written and read to Fitzgerald in 1835, the *Morte d'Arthur* had no prologue and epilogue. These were added to give a setting and add circumstance to the poem.

Page 134, line 23.

*Mouthing out his hollow oes and aes.* Those who were privileged to hear Tennyson himself read, report that these lines are a fairly accurate description of his own method in recitation.

Page 137, line 37.

*Authority forgets a dying king.* This line has been often singled out by criticism for its wonderfully Shakespearean note.

Page 143, title.

Tennyson originally wrote a prologue to *The Gardener's Daughter* called *The Ante-chamber*, but decided not to print it, as he considered the poem "already full enough." The prologue may be found in the *Life* i. 109, and will abundantly repay study.

Page 150, title.

The poem of *Dora* was suggested by a story of Miss Mitford's called "Dora Cresswell." Tennyson himself said of it that having, in its very nature, to be told in the simplest possible language, it was one of the pieces in the volume of 1842 which gave him most trouble.

Page 155, title.

AUDLEY COURT, the poet himself said (*Life* i. 106), was partially suggested by Abbey Park at Torquay.

Page 157, line 23.

This fine picture was suggested to the poet when coming from the hill over Torquay, upon one of his walks.

Page 161, title.

EDWIN MORRIS was added to the poems in the seventh edition, published in 1851.

Page 171, title.

Tennyson told Aubrey de Vere (*Life* i. 509) that *The Talking Oak* was "an experiment meant to test the degree in which it is within the power of poetry to *humanise* external nature."

Page 184, title.

THE GOLDEN YEAR was added to the poems in the fourth edition, published in 1846.

Page 184, line 12.

Cf. Proverbs xxx. 15.

Page 186, title.

Tennyson himself said that *Ulysses*, which was written shortly after



Hallam's death, gave his "feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life, perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*" (*Life* i. 196).

Page 188, title.

LOCKSLEY HALL, which is purely imaginary in character and surroundings, was suggested to Tennyson by Sir William Jones's prose translation of the "Moallakât."

Page 189, line 20.

Mr. Edmund Gosse has in his possession a copy of the first edition of the 1842 poems which belonged to B. W. Procter (Barry Cornwall). The former owner has inserted in manuscript, between the nineteenth and twentieth couplets of *Locksley Hall* (ii. 96), i.e., after the words "touching of the lips," the following lines:—

"In the hall there hangs a painting, Amy's arms  
are round my neck,

Happy children in a sunbeam, sitting on the  
ribs of wreck.

In my life there is a picture: she that clasp'd  
my neck is flown,

I am left within the shadow, sitting on the  
wreck alone ;"

continuing, "O my cousin, shallow-hearted." Now, these lines reappeared in 1886 in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, with two slight alterations. In the later version the first line runs, "Amy's arms about my neck," while in the second couplet the verbs are in the past tense. Apparently they stood in the first draft of *Locksley Hall*, to which Procter had had access, and were cancelled when the manuscript went to press, eventually forming the germ from which the second poem grew.

Page 196, line 4.

Of this line Tennyson said that he made it when taking his first railway journey from Liverpool to Manchester in 1830. He thought the wheels

ran in a groove; and his eyes could not correct the error, for it was a dark night, and there was a great crowd about the train in the station.

Page 199, title.

THE TWO VOICES was written just after Hallam's death, the last part, says FitzGerald, being probably composed in the fields about Dulwich. In those days Tennyson was, in his own words, "so utterly miserable that I said, 'Is life worth anything?'"

Page 214, title.

FitzGerald said that he first heard of *The Day-dream* in Cumberland in 1835, when it was without the prologue and epilogue. These, he conjectured, were added, for the same reason as the prologue to the *Morte d'Arthur*, to give a reason for telling an old-world tale.

Page 227, title.

This poem originally appeared, with the title *St. Agnes*, in "The Keepsake" of 1837. The name was altered to *St. Agnes' Eve* in 1855.

Page 228, title.

This poem, apart from its own intrinsic beauty, has literary interests akin to those of *The Lady of Shalott*, as showing the early attraction of Tennyson to the Arthurian theme.

Page 232, title.

This finely-flavoured poem, the most successful of Tennyson's half-humorous pieces, recalls memories of his early years in London, when he was a great frequenter of the old Cock Tavern, which used to stand on the site now occupied by the Bank of England on the north side of Fleet Street, opposite the Temple. The old mantelpiece, and the carved and gilded cock (by Grinling Gibbons), have been transferred to another

house on the other side of the way, but the old building was destroyed in 1886.

Page 240, title.

To——. These verses originally appeared in *The Examiner* for March 24, 1849. The person to whom they were addressed has never been satisfactorily identified.

Page 241, title.

The E. L. to whom these lines are addressed was Edward Lear, author of "Journals of Tours in Central and S. Italy and Albania."

Page 242, title.

*Lady Clare* was suggested by Miss Ferrier's novel "The Inheritance," published in 1824.

Page 245, title.

This poem is founded upon the true story of Henry Cecil, Lord Exeter's, marriage with Sarah Hoggins during the last years of the eighteenth century.

Page 249, title.

Tennyson himself said that it was this poem, and not the more commonly popular *Brook*, which enshrined his memories of the little stream that flows before the Rectory at Somersby.

Page 257, title.

These lines originally appeared in "The Keepsake" in 1851, and were added to the "Poems" in the same year.

Page 258, title.

THE EAGLE was added to the "Poems" in 1851.

Page 258, title.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK."—These lines, which are often incorrectly attributed to the influence of Clevedon, were really composed in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning.

Page 259, title.

*The Brook* first appeared in the same volume as *Maud* in 1855. *The Letters*, *The Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, *The Daisy*, *To the Rev. F. D. Maurice*, *Will*, and *The Charge of the Light Brigade* were in the same volume also.

Page 268, title.

THE ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON was first published in November 1852, in the shape of a sixteen-page pamphlet. It was severely criticised, and when a second edition appeared in the next year, it had been considerably amended. These alterations included the addition of the entire passage in the ninth stanza from "On God and Godlike men we build our trust," to "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust." The Forster Library at South Kensington contains a copy of the first edition, with the corrections made in the second, written in in Forster's own handwriting.

Page 270, line 19.

The reader will scarcely need to be reminded that the poet here imagines the spirit of Nelson as making inquiry of the advancing pageant, whose reply follows in line 22 and onwards.

Page 272, line 7.

The passage referring to Lisbon was added in the second edition.

Page 276, title.

This poem, *The Daisy*, recounts the experiences of a tour taken by Tennyson and his wife in the spring of 1851, after the death of their first child.

Page 279, line 5.

The allusion is to the birth of Hallam, Lord Tennyson, August 11, 1852.

Page 279, line 28.

Maurice was expelled from King's College, for views which were con-



sidered unorthodox; and offered, during the first weeks of 1854, to resign his position as Chaplain at Lincoln's Inn. But the Benchers begged him to reconsider the step.

Page 282, title.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE was first printed in *The Examiner* for December 9, 1854. In the following August a thousand copies were printed on quarto sheets, and distributed among the troops before Sebastopol.

Page 284, title.

THE PRINCESS was originally published in 1847, but underwent many alterations. In the second edition, published in the same year, the corrections were merely verbal; but before the appearance of the third edition (1850) the songs, the prologue, and the conclusion were added. The fourth edition (1851) found alterations in the songs, and the passages alluding to the prince's "weird seizures" added. In the fifth edition (1853) the fifteen lines forming the fourth paragraph of the prologue made their first appearance.

Page 284, line 4.

This opening passage was suggested by a festival of the Mechanics' Institute, held at Maidstone Park, July 6, 1842, under the patronage of Edmund Lushington. Tennyson was present; it was a brilliantly sunny day, and nearly two thousand people were of the company.

Page 284, line 17.

*Celts*, i.e., hatchets of the Stone Age.

Page 284, line 21.

*Crease*, i.e., dagger.

Page 289, line 36.

*Solecisms* is here used in the sense of impossible or fairy anecdotes.

Page 291, line 27.

*Court-Galen*, i.e., of course, court-physician.

Page 292, line 8.

This alludes to an ancient custom, at proxy-betrothals, when the man who was proxy for the bridegroom was brought into the service with his leg bare from the knee downwards.

Page 296, line 31.

That is, so amusing in appearance that even the most wretched and despairing of men would have shaken with laughter at the sight of him.

Page 300, line 15.

*Who taught the Sabine*, i.e., Egeria, the instructress of Numa Pompilius.

Page 300, line 16.

*The foundress*. The reference is to Semiramis, the legendary builder of Babylon.

Page 300, line 17.

*The Carian Artemisia* was present at the battle of Salamis, where she fled and ran down the vessel of her friend Damosithymus of Calyndus. Seeing the collision, and supposing Artemisia's ship to be on his side, Aminias, the Athenian trierarch, allowed her to escape. Xerxes, watching the fray, and mistaking Artemisia's false tactics for a feat of bravery, exclaimed, "My men are become women, and my women men!"

Page 300, line 18.

*Rhodope*, told of by Herodotus, was believed to have built the pyramid which was really the work of Nitocris. See Herodotus ii. 129-135.

Page 300, line 19.

*Clelia*, having been given as hostage to Lars Porsena, escaped from his camp and swam the Tiber. Cornelia is, of course, the mother of

the Gracchi. The Palmyrene is Zenobia; and Agrippina was the wife of Germanicus.

Page 301, line 13.

*I.e.*, The wife of King Midas, who, unable to keep the secret of her husband's deformity, whispered it into a hole by the water-side, whence grew a reed, which, shaken by the wind, repeated the whisper to the world. But in the original story in Ovid it is the king's barber, and not his wife, who let out the secret.

Page 301, line 28.

*The Lycian custom, i.e.*, (Herodotus i. 173) the habit of taking their names from their mothers instead of their fathers.

Page 301, line 29.

*Lar and Lucumo* were titles of honour among the Etruscans, and those who bore these titles became one of the classes of Roman burgesses under Romulus.

Page 301, line 33.

*The laws Salique, i.e.*, the Salic Law, which prohibited inheritance from passing through the female line.

Page 303, line 24.

*Adams* is used for "originators," "founders."

Page 307, line 22.

It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the daughters of Danaus were punished in Hades for the murder of their husbands by having to carry water in bottomless vases.

Page 310, line 16.

Astraea, having been the last of the gods to leave earth on the breaking-up of the Golden Age, was to be the first, so the prophecy ran, to return to earth, should the Golden Age ever be reinstated.

Page 317, line 30.

See Esther i. 12.

Page 319, line 10.

*Gynaecium, i.e.*, women's quarters.

Page 319, line 33.

*Diotima*, priestess of Mantinea, whom Socrates consulted.

Page 322, line 27.

Tennyson said himself that this exquisite "blank-verse lyric" was written "in the yellowing autumn-tide at Tintern Abbey."

Page 325, line 19.

The Valkyries were the warrior-maidens who attended the Scandinavian heroes to battle.

Page 329, line 31.

*I.e.*, I led you to all the fountains of taste and learning.

Page 339, line 7.

*Mawkin*, originally "kitchen-wench"; here used of any girl in a menial office.

Page 342, line 37.

*I.e.*, Dashed with blood, the evidence of coming death. The use is proleptic.

Page 345, line 27.

*Morions*, helmets. The morion proper was introduced into England from Spain in the sixteenth century. Cf. "Marmion" i. 3—

"With musket, pike, and morion  
To welcome noble Marmion."

Page 348, line 23.

*Tomyris* (Herodotus i. 205-214) was Queen of the Massagetæ. Cyrus offered her marriage, but she declined to receive his messengers, knowing his design was against her kingdom. They fought, and Cyrus fell. After his death, Tomyris thrust his head into a skin of blood, in pursuance of her threat to glut him



with blood, if he refused to deliver up her son, Spargapises, whom he had taken prisoner.

Page 349, line 1.

Referring to Russian marriages.

Page 349, line 4.

The Hindu sacrifice of the wife on the pyre of the dead husband.

Page 349, line 6.

This also refers to an old Hindu custom, now abolished.

Page 350, line 14.

*I.e.*, A plague of men as bitter as the Egyptian plague of locusts or frogs.

Page 354, line 16.

The *great dame of Lapudoth* is, of course, Deborah. Cf. Judges v.

Page 355, line 11.

*Blanch'd in our annals, i.e.*, marked with a white stone after the old Roman fashion.

Page 357, line 10.

*Bredc, i.e.*, broidery.

Page 363, line 1.

*Pharos, i.e.*, the lighthouse, of course, not the island on which it was built.

Page 365, line 22.

*Gyres, i.e.*, circles. Cf. Dryden—

“Quick and more quick he spins in giddy gyres.”

Page 367, line 31.

*The Oppian law.* This law was passed during the Second Punic War, forbidding any woman from wearing a parti-coloured dress, or from having more than an ounce of gold upon her person, or from approaching within a mile of any city in a car drawn by horses. During the consulship of Cato this law was repealed, despite his endeavours to maintain it. The voice of the Roman

women was too strong, and the enactments against luxury were removed. This explains the allusion in the next lines.

Page 367, line 34.

*The tax, i.e.*, the tax which the triumvirs, after the death of Cæsar, endeavoured to levy in order to raise funds for the war against the conspirators.

Page 378, title.

A. H. H., *i.e.*, of course, Arthur Henry Hallam, Tennyson's friend and intimate. He was two years younger than Tennyson, being born in February 1811, and died at Vienna, September 15, 1833. For details of his life and friendship with Tennyson, see the biographical introduction to this volume.

Tennyson was seventeen years in thinking out *In Memoriam*, of which time he employed at least ten years in writing it; and, when it was almost finished, the MS. was nearly lost through being left in the “bacon-cupboard” in a London lodging which the poet had just deserted. Thence it was rescued by Coventry Patmore. The poem appeared anonymously in 1850, the year of Tennyson's marriage.

Many attempts have been made to analyse the structure of *In Memoriam*, by far the most successful being that of Professor Bradley, who divides the poem into four main sections, dependent upon the chronology of the elegy.

Part I. To the first Christmas after Hallam's death—Sections i. to xxvii. This portion, dealing for the most part in the poet's absorption in grief, rises towards the end to a more resigned attitude in the confidence that love survives the loss of the beloved.

Part II. To the second Christmas—Sections xxviii. to lxxvii. The survival of the dead after death is the

subject of meditation, involving many changes of philosophic thought, gradually deepening to a conviction of immortality.

Part III. To the third Christmas—Sections LXXVIII. to CIII. The reflection now becomes more concrete, lingering lovingly over retrospect, and recalling happy incidents of memory.

Part IV. From the third Christmas—Sections CIV. to CXXXI. The poet begins to look forward into the future, inspired by a faith in the ultimate good of life and in the immortality of love.

Readers who are interested in a more detailed study of the analysis of the poem should refer to Professor Bradley's "Commentary on Tennyson's *In Memoriam*" (Macmillan), where they will find the whole subject intimately and critically treated.

The prologue, beginning "Strong Son of God," is, in effect, a summary of the poem, an apologia for the early doubt, and a confirmation of the poet's ultimate faith.

Page 380, line 1.

Tennyson himself said that Goethe was the poet referred to. The doctrine is rather that of Goethe's general attitude to life than of any specific passage.

Page 384, line 5.

*Dark house*, etc. The poet imagines himself standing at daybreak before the house in which Hallam used to live, 67 Wimpole Street, London.

Page 385, line 13.

From section IX. to section XVII. Tennyson addresses the ship which is bringing Hallam's body to England. He pictures its journey with all the circumstances of seafaring life and change.

Page 387, line 13.

The poet imagines his soul, in a state of ecstasy, issuing like a dove

to meet the coming ship; leaving the "ark" of the body, and making its way over the waste of waters.

Page 390, line 1.

This passage, as Gatty points out, ("Key to *In Memoriam*," p. 19) is "highly metaphysical." The poet "asks whether sorrow, which is his abiding feeling, can be such a changing, as to alternate in his breast betwixt 'calm despair' and 'wild unrest'?" or does he only just take this 'touch of change,' as calm or storm prevails, knowing no more of transient form than does a lake that 'holds the shadow of a lark' when reflected on its surface?"

Page 391, line 14.

The burial at Clevedon is now described. Hallam's body was laid to rest in the old church at Clevedon on January 3, 1834.

Page 397, line 21.

The time is now the first Christmas after Hallam's death, when every happy ceremonial recalls the loss of his friend with twofold bitterness.

Page 400, line 1.

The poet now muses over the record of death, and recurs to the story of Lazarus, who, having returned living from the grave, might have left some testimony to his experience.

Page 400, line 16.

St. John alone of the Evangelists records the raising of Lazarus.

Page 400, line 17.

The reference is to the later visit of Christ to the home at Bethany, where Mary is regarded as absorbed in a wondering contemplation of the brother who returned from the grave, and of the Saviour who restored him to life.



Page 401, line 5.

This difficult passage seems to rebuke an unnamed thinker, who has arrived at some sort of loose and uncentred faith, for the self-confidence with which he criticises the simpler, more formal belief of his sister. The poet insists that her faith, being centred upon a sacred type of flesh and blood, has more foundation than the brother's, and is more likely to endure the assaults of rationalism.

Page 403, line 17.

The heavenly Muse reproves the poet for venturing upon holy ground, to which he replies that he has only striven to comfort himself, and to render tribute to the power of love.

Page 406, line 21.

The subject of immortality now engrosses the poet's mind, and is developed through the following sections.

Page 415, line 17.

In these lines the poet reaches the depth of distress in discovering the cruelty of Nature; in the next section he breaks loose from excess of mourning, and turns from the grave with a promise to the dead that as long as life endures he will recall the everlasting farewell of love, which he now dedicates to the memory of his friend.

Page 421, line 1.

His memory returns at night to the moonlit chancel at Clevedon.

Page 424, line 1.

This is the anniversary of Hallam's death.

Page 430, line 21.

The poet longs for the birth of spring, to melt the winter in his heart and restore him to comfort.

Page 431, line 20.

It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that Hallam was engaged to Tennyson's sister, Emily.

Page 432, line 29.

*O true in word.* This section, like the epithalamium which concludes the poem, is addressed to Edmund Law Lushington, who married Tennyson's sister, Cecilia.

Page 436, line 17.

Lord Tennyson (*Life* i. 313) records that this poem was written at Barmouth, and that the poet would quote it as "giving pre-eminently his sense of the joyous peace in Nature."

Page 437, line 1.

This section gives reminiscences of the old Cambridge days, and of the debates of the Apostles.

Page 438, line 8.

Lord Tennyson records (*Life* i. 38) that these lines were written from the poet's memory of a remark of Hallam, who said, after reading a description of Michael Angelo's features: "Alfred, look over my eyes: surely I have the bar of Michael Angelo!"

Page 438, line 21.

This section recalls memories of Hallam's visits to Somersby, at the time when he was engaged to Tennyson's sister.

Page 444, line 16.

This passage, with its account of Tennyson's trance, is founded upon strange psychical experiences to which he was subject. They are alluded to again, in *The Ancient Sage*, in the lines beginning—

"More than once when I  
Sat all alone."

Tennyson's own account of these trances is contained in a letter of his dated May 7, 1874, as follows:—

"I have never had any revelations through anæsthetics, but a kind of waking trance (this for lack of a better name) I have frequently had

quite up from my boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has often come to me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till, all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to resolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility. The loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life."

Page 447, line 9.

He addresses friends who are to travel to Vienna.

Page 448, line 9.

This is now the second anniversary of Hallam's death.

Page 449, line 1.

This, and the three following sections, refer to the time when the Tennysons were obliged to leave Somersby in 1837. The family had stayed on at the Rectory for six years after the death of the poet's father, by permission of the patron and the incumbent. It now seemed necessary, however, for them to move nearer London, and they took a house at High Beech, in Epping Forest.

Page 453, line 1.

Christmas in a new home brings saddened memories.

Page 455, line 13.

February 1, 1838.

Page 456, line 5.

The poet now turns from solitude, and determines to take up his part in the work of the world.

Page 461, line 5.

Spring returns, and with it regret; but in the next section the poet

shakes off his melancholy in determination for the future, and in hope of a renewed friendship beyond the grave.

Page 463, line 25.

He returns again to the London house in Wimpole Street, but now the dawn is bright with hope and expectation.

Page 464, line 8.

Cf. 1 Corinthians xv. 32.

Page 467, line 9.

The poet surveys the elegy as a whole, declaring that, even at its saddest, it was touched by the spirit of Love, which henceforth (cxxv.) shall be his Lord and King.

Page 470, line 25.

Tennyson himself explained the "living will" as "free-will, the higher and enduring part of man." (*Life* i. 319.)

Page 471, line 9.

The poem closes with an epithalamium upon the marriage of Edmund Law Lushington with the poet's sister, Cecilia, in 1842. Tennyson himself said that the epilogue was added in order that the poem, beginning with death, might end with the promise of a new life.

Page 475, title.

MAUD was first published in 1855: the sub-title "A Monodrama," which appears in later editions, was not added until 1877. The germ of the poem is the lyric beginning, "O that 'twere possible" (p. 512). These lines were originally contributed by Tennyson in 1836 to "The Tribute," a volume of selections edited by Lord Northampton, for the benefit of a sick priest. Years afterwards he unearthed the poem, and read it to Sir John Simeon, who suggested that it needed some sort of prelude to make it intelligible. Tennyson



then started to work; and, one lyric suggesting another, *Maud* was slowly written, and, in a sense, written backwards. Much of the poem was written at Swainston, Sir John Simeon's seat. Tennyson said of the poem (*Life* i. 396) that "it is a little 'Hamlet,'" and it must be read as purely dramatic in intention. The misunderstanding to which it was subjected at its first appearance (an account of which will be found in the introduction to this volume) was entirely due to the failure to recognise that the poet speaks throughout in the character of his hero, and not in his own person.

Page 475, line 12.

Tennyson drew his readers' attention to the fact (*Life* i. 396) that to the morbid imagination of the hero of *Maud* the very face of Nature is distorted with unhappy visions. The heath is "blood-red," and the autumn woods speak of ruin.

Page 478, line 5.

This noble verse, together with those that precede it, gave especial offence at the time of their publication. An anonymous poet issued a rather vulgar travesty called "Anti-Maud," containing the following reply:—

"Who is it clamours for war? Is it one who is ready to fight?  
Is it one who will grasp the sword, and rush on the foe with a shout?  
Far from it:—'tis one of the musing mind who merely intends to write—  
He sits at home by his own snug hearth, and hears the storm howl without."

This opposition was aroused by the misfortunes of the Crimean War, and soon blew over.

Page 491, line 4.

There is an amusing story of Tennyson's reading this lyric (it was one of his favourites for reading aloud), and turning to a lady at his side to ask, "What birds were crying

and calling?" The lady, willing to justify her taste for poetry, replied, "Nightingales, I imagine." "Ugh!" said the poet, "what a cockney you are! Do nightingales cry 'Maud'? Certainly not! But rooks do. 'Caw, caw, caw'! It's very like it, at any rate!"

Page 492, line 4.

*Left the daisies rosy*, because the underside of the daisy is revealed from her footprint. A beautiful fancy, true to nature.

Page 497, line 21.

*I have led her home*. Lord Tennyson (*Life* i. 398) says that this poem, and the lyrics "O that 'twere possible" and "Courage, poor heart of stone," were Tennyson's favourites in the whole poem.

Page 498, line 3.

Tennyson wrote much of *Maud* under the shadow of a magnificent cedar on the lawn at Swainston, which no doubt suggested this noble passage.

Page 498, line 24.

*Sad astrology*. Tennyson explained the epithet (*Life* i. 404) by its reference to modern astronomy, contrasted with the ancient astrology which was believed to have a genial influence upon the life of man.

Page 501, line 22.

*Betrothed us*. Cf. section VII., p. 486.

Page 516, line 7.

The wretched man is now in the madhouse.

Page 519, line 20.

He has recovered his senses, but is left a ruin of his former self.

Page 522, title.

These first four idyls appeared in 1859. *Iviven* was finished (*Life* i. 414) in February 1856, and *Enid* during the summer of 1857.

*Guinevere* was brought to an end on March 15, 1858, and *Elaine* was finished during the same year.

The poem of *Enid* underwent many changes before its final publication. In 1857 Tennyson privately printed six trial copies of two idyls called "Enid and Nimue: The True and the False," Nimue being the first name given to Vivien. Many alterations were then made, and in 1859 the four idyls were put in print as "The True and the False: Four Idyls of the King," which contains practically the text of the first four idyls as here printed, with the exception of alterations made in the proofs, chiefly of a verbal kind. Students who desire a full account of the corrections, with an examination of the growth of the text, are referred to Dr. Richard Jones's admirable little volume, "The Growth of the Idyls of the King" (J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia). Those who wish to gain a simple idea of the divergences between Tennyson's narrative and that of Malory, should consult Mr. Harold Littledale's "Essays on Lord Tennyson's Idyls of the King" (Macmillan), and "Tennyson's Idyls of the King and the Arthurian Story," by M. W. Maccallum (Maclehose, Glasgow).

Page 529, line 32.

*Bourg*, early English for borough, or city.

Page 533, line 2.

*Costrel*, i.e., a harvester's vessel for containing drink, sometimes of leather, but also of wood and earthenware.

Page 533, line 5.

*Manchet bread*, i.e., bread made of fine white flour.

Page 540, line 27.

*Turkis*, i.e., of course, turquoise.

Page 541, line 1.

*Mixen*, i.e., dunghill.

Page 545, line 3.

*Gaudy-day*, i.e., festival or holiday.

Page 553, line 12.

"The annulets or little rings of rushes twisted by girls are often mentioned in our old poets, as, for instance, in Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess' i. 3—'Or gather rushes, to make many a ring for thy long fingers.'" (Littledale's "Essays on the Idyls of the King," p. 148.)

Page 555, line 7.

*Bicker*, originally flash or glitter, is here used in its secondary meaning of skirmish with words; play lightly with.

Page 562, line 33.

*Haft*, i.e., handle.

Page 562, line 35.

*Beeves*, plural of beef, i.e., oxen. Cf. Scott, "Lay of the Last Minstrel" vi. 10—

"They sought the beeves that made their broth."

Page 571, line 24.

*The vicious quitch*, i.e., rough grass, which grows quickly and strangles the corn.

Page 573, line 19.

"Geraint fell at last fighting against the Saxons at the battle of Llongborth, that is, 'the Haven of Ships,' variously conjectured to have been Portsmouth or Langport." (Littledale, p. 152.)

Page 573, line 23.

*Broceliande*, in Brittany.

Page 579, line 7.

*Nadir*, literally, the point of sky opposite the zenith; so, the lowest point.



Page 591, line 30.

*Poach'd filth*, i.e., swampy or slushy mud, the result of being trampled upon.

Page 593, line 6.

*Session* for seat.

Page 599, line 26.

*Lets*, i.e., hinders.

Page 606, line 23.

*Rathe*, i.e., early.

Page 615, line 16.

*Hern* is, of course, the same word as heron.

Page 628, line 33.

*Dole*, i.e., dolour, sorrow.

Page 629, line 21.

It is worth noticing, as an example of the skill with which Tennyson would adapt Malory into verse, that these lines are almost transplanted word for word from the pages of the "Morte d'Arthur."

Page 638, line 10.

*Colewort*, i.e., cabbage.

Page 641, line 15.

*Housel*, i.e., the Holy Eucharist. Cf. "Hamlet" i. 5—

"Unhousel'd, disappointed, unaneled."

Page 644, line 29.

*Spigot*, the pin in the tap of a butt, which keeps in the liquor.

Page 645, line 19.

*Dundagil*. In later editions Tennyson altered this to the modern name Tintagel.

Page 653, line 15.

*But hither shall I never come again*. Lord Tennyson (*Life* i. 419) records that these were the first lines of *Guinevere*, written July 9, 1857, and intended as the nucleus of the poem.

Page 685, title.

THE GRANDMOTHER'S APOLOGY originally appeared in *Once a Week*, July 16, 1859, with an illustration by Millais.

Page 690, title.

SEA DREAMS was first printed in *Macmillan's Magazine* for January 1860. Tennyson said that the rascal in the poem (*Life* i. 429) was drawn from a man who had cheated him in early life.

Page 690, line 26.

*The Apocalyptic milistone*. Cf. Revelation xviii. 21.

Page 698, title.

TITHONUS was first published in the *Cornhill Magazine* for February 1860. It was begun many years before, in the days when *Ulysses* was written. Thackeray was the editor of *Cornhill* who secured this fine poem for his magazine, and it was a special pride to him to have been the first to publish it.

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Acco 1011













